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The Last of
FREE AFRICA



HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS
TAFARI MAKONNEN
Signs "Selam l'Ameriki Hesh" (Greeting
to the American People).

The Last of **FREE AFRICA**

The account of an expedition into Abyssinia with observations on the manners, customs and traditions of the Ethiopians with some pungent remarks on the anomalous political situation that, at present, obtains between this ancient kingdom and the nations of the world.

BY
GORDON MACCREAGH

Author of White Waters and Black



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To
HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS
TAFARI MAKONNEN

In recognition of
His Great Achievements for the Progress
of
THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF ETHIOPIA

INTRODUCTION

WHEN Samuel Johnson wrote an introduction to his translation of Father Jerome Lobo's "Voyage to Abyssinia," which voyage was begun in 1622, he said:

"The reader will here find no regions cursed with irremediable barrenness, or blessed with spontaneous fecundity; no perpetual gloom or unceasing sunshine; nor are the nations here described either void of all sense of humanity, or consummate in all private and social virtues: here are no Hottentots without religion, polity or articulate language; no Chinese perfectly polite, and completely skilled in all sciences: He will discover, what will always be discovered by a diligent and impartial enquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contest of passion and reason; and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distributions, but has balanced in most countries their particular inconveniences by particular favours."

What was true in 1622, and again when Dr. Johnson penned his introduction, is true to-day. Though to-day the interest of the world in Ethiopia is not that of the Portuguese missionary who was intent on replacing one Christian dogma with another; nor yet that of Dr. Johnson's contemporaries who read with avidity the account of travels wherein the author describes

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ostriches that subsist on desert rocks and unicorns that roam through the land of the Queen of Sheba; but rather it is focused on a free nation attempting to maintain its integrity against the encroachments of its neighbors.

Will the rapacity of the nations of Europe, in this day of treaties-to-outlaw-war and a pretentious League of Nations, be allowed to assert itself to conquer or dominate a nation that has successfully maintained its independence against African, Asiatic and European since Menelek I returned from the court of Solomon?

To understand the European attitude it is necessary to appreciate the vast undeveloped mineral and agricultural resources of the country; to realize that the source of the Blue Nile, the British key to success in the Sudan, is in Lake Tsana in northern Abyssinia; to remember that Germany lost all of her colonies during the Great War and that German East Africa, now Tanganyika Territory mandated to Great Britain by the League of Nations, was very precious to her; to bear in mind that at the Battle of Adowa in 1896 an invading Italian army of 10,000 trained and well-equipped soldiers was out-manuevered and severely defeated by a horde of Abyssinians armed with spears and long, curved swords. Nor will a consideration of the colonial policy of the French in Africa fail to reveal the economic and strategic advantage that would be gained by having a prosperous colony flanking the British possessions on the east; and how possession of this land would strengthen her single outpost, French Somaliland, in East Africa and give her a surer in-

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intermediate base for her warships and merchant marine bound for her colonies in the Far East. As it is, France already controls most of the imports and exports of Abyssinia through the only railroad into the country.

The social and political aspects of Abyssinia are similar to Europe of the Middle Ages. Due to isolation, they have progressed no farther. To-day, with isolation no longer possible, the more progressive and far-sighted Ethiopians led by His Highness Tafari Makonnen realize the necessity of modernizing their ancient kingdom. They realize that the resources of the country must be developed if Ethiopia is to take her place with the nations of the world and that this development must come from within, or at least not with the aid of Europe, lest an economic entanglement lead to political domination. They realize that the masses must be educated to understand modern political concepts and the machine age. What development we have attained to by natural growth during a thousand years they must miraculously accomplish immediately.

It is a stupendous task this young ruler of ten million people has set himself. He has pitted himself against the most astute diplomatic and imperialistic minds of Europe, jealous of furthering their own interests without regard for the integrity of the smaller nations that stand between them and their goal of expansion. But it is these same jealousies that may prove the salvation of Ethiopia under the guidance of her clear-sighted prince. America will continue to watch with interest the experiment of the League of Nations should one of

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its members undertake the annexation of the last of free Africa.

Gordon MacCreagh has recently returned from Abyssinia and his book proves him to be a cool and judicial observer. He has written, primarily, of travel—manners, customs, people, big game hunting—but his presentation and interpretation of the political influences at work in the country should tend to counteract many of the nebulous and erroneous reports current in the past few years.

R. W. B.

September 5, 1928

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THE LAST OF FREE AFRICA

THE LAST OF FREE AFRICA

CHAPTER I

GETTING THERE

THIS title, at its very outset, will call forth a loud wail of indignation. The entire reading public of Liberia—de hull fohteen ob 'em, sah!—will rise up and scream that they too are a free people, governed by their own legislature under their own elected president. But this book is not about them. Let him who, in these days of active debunking, is interested inquire into the matter of which of the big rubber and oil companies control the finances of Liberia—and the military establishment, and the agriculture, and the boundaries, and the customs, and—though this, of course, is a whisper of the foulest slander—even the elections.

No. This book is about ABYSSINIA. The ancient kingdom of Ethiopia. The land of "Prester John," of the Queen of Sheba. The Unconquered. Free since before the beginning of history. Governed by its own hereditary ruler, his Imperial Highness Tafari Makonnen, descendant of King Solomon.

There are interesting things to be noted in a country

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which has remained, as has no other country in the world, free since all known time. Not the least interesting of which is that it has contrived to maintain this extraordinary freedom in Africa, the rest of which has long since been gobbled up by the nations of Europe. When it is added that this so unique country is probably the richest portion of all Africa, in mineral as well as in agricultural possibilities, and that it is, furthermore, blessed with a white man's climate, the thing becomes miracle, a portent to be considered with more than mere interest.

Why is this thing? How does Abyssinia come to be still free? Will she remain free? What about this astonishing country?

These are questions the answers to which, blundering and fallible though they may be, may yet, I fondly hope, be book-worthy.

But before writing about Abyssinia one must first get there. Why is it that people who write travel books never tell one how to get to the place? They start always either having arrived at the beginning of what they consider the interesting stuff, or at best at the port of entry. It seems not amiss, since every reader of a travel book is inevitably a potential traveler, to give at least an outline of how to get to the country about which he is going to read.

Let us for a moment examine travel. Why do people travel? Some, for reasons of sordid business. To these I can offer no inducement to read. For I fondly hope that not an item of ponderous useful information may

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creep into these pages. Some, again—and I trust that these are in the great majority—travel for just the adventure of the thing. They go because they are young in spirit; because their minds haven't settled into self-satisfied ruts; because they want to go and look and find out, to see new things. They go because they are of the strong blood of those restless ones "to whom the bird has sung, That once went singing Southwards when all the world was young."

And there are yet some—strong men all—who travel in order to get a holiday from the cloying sweetness of their safe and sane homes. Fishing or hunting, or even golf, is the usual subterfuge. But in these modern days the cloying sweetness often packs up her kit and goes right along. So my own excuse for the vacation is to go exploring into the wild and dangerous corners of the earth. And then the lady who rules my destinies, who has been reading somebody else's wife's story of how to remain young and beautiful by using somebody's well-advertised cold cream twice daily in the miasmatic jungle, decides to pack up her kit and come right along to see what this exploring business is like—and to get her picture into rotogravures too.

Therefore, since the go-look-see and find out is very considerably a part of the adventure of travel, I feel that I must first of all set forth the difficulties of going to Abyssinia.

Let one who doubts that it is difficult try in our own United States of America to find out, through the regular channels of travel information, how to get,

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with the least delay, expense, and trouble, to any place that lies off the regular tourist trails.

Inquiring at all the travel bureaus of New York city, I found out how *not* to get to Abyssinia. I found out, of course, that I had to get first to Djibouti in French Somaliland, from where a railroad runs into Addis Abeba, the capital of Abyssinia. Good! How did one get to Djibouti? I found, to begin with, that no ships sailing from any port in America touched at Djibouti; nor, as far as I could learn, did any British ship. My choice lay between French and Italian ships. The obvious thing to do was to go to a French or an Italian port. A French colony naturally suggested Marseilles.

I found, next, that a "little rain" season ended in Abyssinia in the first week of March and a "big rain" began about the middle of June. Since the malignant gods who rule finances had held up the time of my starting well into February; and since the gods who control rain are the most merciless of all gods—time was a vital element. Information available in New York told me that the quickest—though, alas, by no means the cheapest—connection at about that date to Marseilles was via London and across all France via Paris to Marseilles.

Having thus collected all the best advice to be had in New York, I took it and went accordingly.

That was the way not to go. One—even one who has traveled before—would think that the pestilence of customs would not fall upon goods passing through a country packed in cases and unopened. That is what

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I thought. Yet it is the tortuous study of the minds of customs and immigration officials that makes psychoanalysts the queer people that they are. In England, free England, it cost two days' time and the friendly coöperation of the Masonic fraternity and many—very many—drinks to persuade the customs people that it was within the law of the realm to seal up my cases and let them be put across the Channel by a bonded transfer company.

In France the traveler has been brought up to expect endless customs trouble. Yet in France I was met with a charming courtesy and no trouble at all. No customs trouble, that is to say; but—as one has also always been brought up to expect—the railroad officials, immediately upon my landing upon the shores of *la belle* France, contrived to lose everything that was not actually held on to by hand and taken into the *wagon-lit*—and there were twenty-two cases of it all. Frantic telegrams and long-distance telephone messages from Paris during the course of the next day finally located the baggage, which an industrious agent, eager to oblige, had in the meanwhile found and shipped direct to Marseilles—by *grande vitesse*.

The "grand swiftness" is Gallic humor. Here, we call it plain freight.

So to Marseilles I had to go and wait for the freight-train. French freight-trains have never been known to slay automobilists who don't stop-look-and-listen. The company Messageries Maritimes absolutely refused to delay their boat till that freight-train came in. Of course, they had more experience with their

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freight-trains than I had. Yet it did come in, exactly six days later. But the company did not penalize me; and I was permitted to transfer my ticket to the next boat without the formality of a government investigation.

Total loss of time, ten days. Total cost of getting that baggage upon the boat at Marseilles, \$184.

Having made due sacrifice to the hungry gods of finance, and having eventually arrived at Djibouti, I found out that a splendid American boat, sailing out of the port of New York, while it did not touch at Djibouti, touched at Aden; that it cost less than half the price of the other way; and that—here comes in the vital element of that knowledge which is power—from Aden it was but an overnight's ferry run to Djibouti. But all the travel bureaus of New York could not supply that vital item.

The moral of which is that a well-informed travel bureau would be well worthy of its hire.

It is difficult for an American to do Paris in a day without recording his impressions.

Fleeting comment upon Paris is that nobody needs to know French, since every shop speaks English; that the famous wicked revues are not nearly as spectacular or clever or as salacious as our own New York copy; that most of our familiar newspapers and stores and advertised articles are represented there; and that, in short, one might take Paris for a New York suburb, were it not for the frightful coffee and the lamentable lack of pretty girls.

Slightly more leisurely comment upon Marseilles is

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that it offers a splendid opportunity for a man who has not much money and who likes the water sports to spend a summer there. Fishing is extraordinarily good. Delightful motor-boat trips may be arranged, either along an interesting coast or through a maze of inland waterways via the Rhône Canal. A thirty-foot auxiliary sailing yawl or ketch, the approximate second-hand value of which would be some \$2,500 at home, can be bought in Marseilles—same equipment and condition—for twenty-five thousand francs, which is about a thousand dollars. Living costs are about two dollars a day.

It is quite surprising that this town doesn't advertise itself to the half million Americans who go to France every year for the sole purpose of spending money. It seems to think that it is sufficiently known on account of the thousands who arrive from the East and rush through there en route to Paris. Which, of course, it is not. The rich Americans in their thousands just miss Marseilles and go to the Riviera. If more of them went to the former place they might in time teach those people to regard sea-bathing as a sport rather than as a duteous ceremony.

Days of delightful blue Mediterranean, with perhaps a volcano on the far horizon, which passengers who study the complicated map in the smoking-room, called by pitying seafaring men the simplest form of chart, decide must be Vesuvius or Etna, but which is probably Stromboli. Then Port Said. But before saying good-by to the Mediterranean it must be noted that quite the pleasantest feature of traveling through

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that sunny sea is the thought of the friends left behind in New York in February. Or better still, in Boston. Or yet better—but no, the decent man refrains from gloating over the people who live in some of those chill places.

Let the American traveler go warily about Port Said. Let him, before landing, leave all his money in the tightly locked safe of the ship's purser. Before arrival, stewards go round warning passengers to keep their cabin doors locked and their hands upon their pocket-books.

Of course, the traveler has learned that from the moment he begins to negotiate for a steamship ticket he is the legal prey of everybody else in the world. In France he has come to know the special organizations perfected for the mulcting of *les millionnaires américains*. But in Port Said the business is wide open, authorized by the town council and the League of Nations, which recognizes it as a free port. This entrance to the East was established as a robber town in the old days when the French built the British canal of Suez. It preyed upon the thousands of canal employees. After the great work had been completed and the highly paid engineers with their lesser satellites had departed, it preyed upon the thousands of British who traveled through it to reach their highly paid posts in India and the farther East. Since those days Port Said has been introduced into the curriculum of the British schools and the people have become educated to it. Now the town lies hungrily in wait for Americans.

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For several decades Port Said has thriven upon a reputation for horrible wickedness. Maybe it exists. But careful inquiry upon each of half a dozen occasions has failed to connect me with anything one jot wickeder than Paris, and with nothing to approach what an earnest seeker may find right at home in New York. The real active and organized wickedness of Port Said is conducted openly and without shame in its shops.

There are, just as in Paris, gaudy shops full of the most enticing treasures culled from all parts of the earth—many of them antiques and labeled "from the tomb of Tut-ankh Amen." All of the brigands speak excellent English and serve coffee as a preliminary to bargaining. It is my theory that the coffee must be doped with some Oriental drug containing the active principle of acquisitiveness. For those who sell never drink it themselves—claiming some religious inhibition before sundown—and those who buy against their better judgment are legion.

In Port Said, as in all Egypt, there flourishes a system of five scales of prices. One for Port Saidenizens. A second, 10 per cent. higher, for the balance of the Egyptians and all of the Arabic-speaking peoples. A third, 100 per cent. higher, for the rest of the black, brown, yellow, and mixed folk who do not speak Arabic. A fourth, 500 per cent. higher, for Europeans. And the fifth, unhampered by any per cent. limit and gaged only by the gullibility of the buyer, for Americans. One might almost say, on this basis, that a finely divided sixth scale exists for Middle Westerners racing

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round the world. But the robber guilds, while their supreme test of mastery is the ability to distinguish between accents, have not as yet advanced quite to that epitome of discernment. They judge rather by volume of speech and inanity of remark—and their accuracy, at that, is surprising.

The only commodity that an American may buy unhesitatingly in Port Said is Egyptian cigarettes. For, even without walking a mile or having them toasted, they are better and cheaper than at home.

It has been my fate to traverse the Suez Canal six times, and each time by night; when it resembles a Hudson River steamer trip with the search-lights chasing each other up and down the banks. Only sometimes a camel comes into the blinding spot-light and plunges in mad terror; and out of the desert night floats the blood-curdling Arabic of its driver.

Close to the Suez end of the canal is a phenomenon that seems to be the logical explanation of one of the most difficult of the miracles of Jehovah. At a place called Bahr-el-Shaluf, through the shallow water of the narrow inlet of the Red Sea between the Sinai peninsula and the mainland, passes the ancient caravan trail. Now the local Arabs aver that when the tide is at its lowest during the neap, and when the wind blows strongly down creek, this inlet may be traversed almost dryshod; but that sometimes when storm comes driving up the Red Sea, forcing the water before it, the tide comes roaring up in a veritable flood. Well, making due allowance for Oriental imagery and for inaccuracies of ancient word-to-mouth history, might

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not this phenomenon be the explanation of the Pharaoh story?

Suez is an envious imitator of Port Said. It exists mainly for the purpose of taking off the giant search-lights with their crews that one has taken aboard at Port Said, and as a refitting station for the robbers, the vendors of phony jewelry, who come all the way through the canal with the ship. One wonders at the courtesy of the steamship company in extending to them this privilege, till one learns that these pests are but amateurs, employees of the search-light company, to whom the canal administration issues licenses to rob foreign passengers. These privileged persons, not being members of the professional guilds, seem to have the right to prowl and to intrude ingratiating smiles into passenger cabins.

After Suez, days of choppy seas interspersed with a panorama of desolate islands and rocky shores, from which blow scorching winds, even in February. Then, one day, a desperate, burnt-up bay opens into the general desolation and the steamer noses gingerly into it.

The bay of Tajurrah, at the far end of which festers the town of Djibouti.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD'S WORST PORT

DJIBOUTI, French Somaliland. The colony so glorious of La France. And typically so. Let the traveler be wary of French colonial officialdom. First, of course, *les passeports*. A fiercely polite gentleman comes on board ship as soon as the flag announces "clean ship," to make certain that no person not properly accredited shall set foot upon the jealously guarded soil; and having seen the passports and carefully examined the full collection of French visas, with all their array of stamps, he takes them away with him, "for examination," and gives the passenger a rain-check which must be delivered next day in person to another fierce gentleman in the bureau of police, who has to know and enter in a ledger one's father's profession and one's mother's maiden name and age, and who receives with amazed incredulity an American's plain assertion that he does not know his mother's age. By the official clock this process of questionnaire, with its attendant delays and interruptions, dawdles away seventy-two minutes; and then the traveler, if he has satisfied the official that he really is a person of no evil intent and that he honest-to-goodness intends to take the first train out of the country, receives another rain-check,

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with which he can finally redeem his passport from yet another official, who trails him to the train to see that he is keeping his word about getting out.

But before that final release, *la douane*. The colonial *douane* is the complete antithesis of the swift easiness of the mother country. Twenty-two cases! Mon Dieu! this is an invasion! They must be opened, every one of them. *Monsieur le douanier* is desolated that these cases are all nailed down and reinforced with strap iron; but it is his unhappy duty to see that nothing contraband passes through the colony. That the cases are *passing through*, in transit, does not matter. There are certain contrabands that must not even pass through to the free empire of Abyssinia.

Disgruntled European nationals stamp off to their consuls to get the matter straightened out. Americans, vaunting themselves as being the greatest nation on earth—and having no consul at Djibouti—go hopefully to the British consul. That gentleman is, as always, a gentleman; courteous and willing to be helpful; but remains vague as to causes. One senses intrigue and, if wise as to the normal channels of gossip, goes to the hotel-keeper and suggests a *petit verre* at one of the little round tables in the veranda.

This hotel-keeper is a Greek and has a national aptitude for intrigue. From him one learns the scandal in a single terse sentence. Abyssinia, he explains, is a country rich in mineral wealth and in agricultural possibilities, and is surrounded on all sides by England, France, and Italy. That is all. He grins and throws his hands out, palms uppermost. His very silence im-

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plies, "nuff sed." But noting still the bewilderment on one's face he laughs aloud and continues.

"But I forget. You Americans do not ever understand international politics."

The hotel-keeper is typical of the European small town tavern host who takes his guests into his bosom as friends with whom one may exchange the gossip of the day. He needs no pressing. He elucidates the gossip of the cafés at unctuous length.

It condenses down to the bald accusation that the three interested parties covet this flowery land of Abyssinia. "Ha, ha!" he laughs—almost snarls. "Just as you Americans do not understand the expediencies of European politics, so do those other big fellows not understand the right to freedom of some of us little ones." It seems that he counts Turkey in Europe in along with those other big fellows and he cherishes some sort of grudge about something. He mutters scandalous things about promises and guarantees, and he spits in his wrath.

But we want to know about Abyssinia. My host throws out his hands in a general denunciation, and after an instinctive look around of caution—for the colonial governor's palace is not so far distant—speaks blasphemy.

Those three big fellows, he says, encompass Abyssinia about all her borders, and while they watch each other like jealous cats on a fence, they have, nevertheless, agreed among themselves for the common advantage that certain articles shall not pass into Abyssinia except under special dispensation. The

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principal and most obvious of these taboos, of course, are all such articles as may come under the heading of military supplies.

It is true, an ordinary American finds it difficult to understand by what mysterious right a group of European nations who happen to control the frontiers can forbid the entry of munitions into a country, free and a member of the League of Nations. Though he can well understand that a well-armed and equipped Abyssinia might, under certain not quite impossible circumstances, be detrimental to the interested parties.

But still, all this is rather hard to believe. One remembers rather vaguely that America made quite a fuss not so very long ago over the question of a European nation interfering with her commerce. Rather incredulously one propounds the question to this scandalous hotel-keeper whether, in the event that Abyssinia might place an order for arms with a big American firm, this censor before the gate would refuse to let the legitimate commerce through.

"Bah!" snorts the hotel-keeper. "Try it, Mr. American, and see." He glances round cautiously once more and becomes confidential. "Look you. Who is the richest man in town?"—he mentions a name, this cautiously incautious man—"And how does he make his money? By smuggling guns into Abyssinia. Cheap guns, my friend; ex-war weapons which he can buy in Belgium for four dollars, and which, thanks to the price of prohibition, that"—he grins—"you understand so well in your country, he can sell in Abyssinia for forty. Is it true, my good friend, that in America

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I could sell a bottle of whisky like this for ten dollars? Heavenly land!"

Much enlightened by this cheerful scandal-monger, one returns to the *douane* to proceed according to one's individual resourcefulness. The man has, if he is not utterly a falsifier, explained a mystery that had seemed very unreasonable and had aroused ire in New York.

In this case—and in this one only—I had been forewarned by a good friend who knew something about Abyssinia that it was absolutely necessary to obtain a pass from the Ministry of War in Paris. I was able to understand now what all the official subterfuges really meant. I asked the *agent douanier* if there had not arrived a letter or a cable or something from the minister of war in Paris. The agent did not know; but he would immediately go in and inquire of the chief of the *douane*. In a moment the chief himself came out.

Ah, meestaire the distinguished! The intrepid explorer Americain! But certainly there had been a cablegram from the minister of war. The little matter of sporting weapons for so well accredited a party—pouf! it was nothing. Monsieur would declare only the number and type of the weapons and the quantity of ammunition and—with deprecating hands—would pay a small transit tax, and all would be well.

I have not yet been able to understand the meaning or reason of a transit tax on weapons passing through the country unused; but it was not too exorbitant—two hundred and sixteen francs altogether—so,

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rather than argue with inexorable officialdom entrenched, I paid the fee; and in another minute two imposing cart-loads containing twenty-two cases of expedition equipment passed untouched through the gate.

On that one point I had been forewarned and I thanked my many gods for the mess of trouble that had been saved thereby. But another pitfall of amazing officialdom gaped before me almost at the custom-house gates. I was in Djibouti; I had safely passed two colonial bureaus. But there was another, more inexorable than either—the bureau of the *chemin de fer*.

The railroad officials suddenly exhibited an astounding state of mind. It mattered not that I was on French soil, having legally passed the customs with weapons in transit; they couldn't accept my "munitions," as they called them, for transport unless I could produce some sort of authority to show that I had a right to take them out of French soil into Abyssinia. From where was I to get such an authorization? That they did not know; but authorization I must have.

So being a citizen of the wealthiest nation on earth, too poor to maintain a consul in Djibouti, I went to the Abyssinian consul, an altogether charming young man who spoke a French that shamed my blundering efforts, and laid my troubles upon his desk. He smiled gravely. Mine was no new story to him—and he discussed ways and means of circumventing the bureaucratic complex. Half diffidently I told him that I had in London obtained a priceless letter from a member of a prominent

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Abyssinian family to Prince Tafari Makonnen, the ruler of the country.

"Splendid," he said. "I will wire to his Imperial Highness." He did. I don't know what he could have said, for he had not even seen the letter; and as for myself, since it was written in Amharic, I could not even guess at its import. But the following day there came a telegram from the prince authorizing entry into Abyssinia, free of all imports, duties, and taxes, of my whole twenty-two cases of equipment, inclusive of all guns and ammunition.

That at last was sufficient for the consciences of the railway officials. They accepted the gear for shipment by the next train—and they charged me more than four times the value of a first-class ticket for "excess baggage." But that train didn't go till three days later; for only two trains leave Djibouti each week for Addis Abeba, the capital of Abyssinia.

Three days of leisure, after my frenzied runnings between colonial bureaus, to be spent somehow in Djibouti. Somewhat of a feat of endurance. Djibouti is all that it has been cursed for, and more so, and earns the right to be added to the places listed as being the last that God made. Situated just around the lower end of the Red Sea in the bay of Tajurrah, it is hot; hotter even than Aden, just across on the Arabian shore. Built on a flat dust heap, it is a permanent sirocco. Glare goggles serve to keep the flies out of one's eyes, but not the blowing sand. It has been said that there are twenty-seven trees in Djibouti. I didn't see all of them. There is a Greek hotel; and if

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one doesn't like that one, there is an Armenian hotel. There is a European quarter consisting of the various European consulates and of a few import houses whose function is to transmit goods into Abyssinia. It has a tiny public park that contains most of the trees and simmers in the sun. There is a Yemen Arab quarter that festers in the heat. There is a polyglot quarter that stenchs. There is a Somali quarter that does it with tenfold ferocity. There is a camel market and a goat market that look down upon the two foregoing as feeble amateurs. And there are flies and drains. Aloof on a sand-bank is the railroad station; and exclusive behind stone walls near the jetty is the governor's mansion, which, surrounded by carefully fostered shrubbery, looks as though it might be cool; as low as a hundred degrees perhaps.

Yet in spite of all, much credit is due to the colonial administration that Djibouti is as habitable as it is. Frightful tales are told about it before the white man came. People came in and dried up like mummies, it is said. But that one is difficult even for travelers to believe. However, a settlement on the edge of a burning desert, where the whole water supply has to be pumped out of deep and brackish wells, has distinctly offered difficulties to colonization—and furnishes a certain measure of explanation as to why its owners might like to move up into the cool and fertile highlands of Abyssinia.

To those of us effete ones who live in our home cities and think of hotels in terms of Statlers and Commonwealths, frightful tales can still be told about

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the best hotel in Djibouti. A flat two-storied building with a deep cloistered veranda along its front; in the rear a place of smells and acrid camel-dung smoke which one discovers to be the kitchen; a network of common electric cord attached with upholstery tacks to plaster walls and wooden partitions for the lights; appalling sanitary arrangements worthy of any French small town; and not a window in the place.

One sleeps with wide open door and hopes that sneak thieves are not too active in Djibouti. One sleeps, that is to say, if one is of robust constitution; for the mosquito-netting is patterned after a Swiss cheese, and the beds are actively inhabited. And then, possibly a morning or two later, one comes across a faded and fly-specked sign hanging half torn from behind a door, warning guests that everything should be kept under key, as the management will not be responsible for any loss.

For relaxation in Djibouti one can hire a Levantine guide to take one after dark to see an Arab dance or a Somali dance or a Sudanese dance. The guide hints leeringly that, if one is in luck, one may witness something shocking. It has been my experience that this dark suggestion is the whole stock in the trade of all Levantine guides. In sheer boredom one decides to see the Yemen Arab in his lighter moods.

An Arab dance consists of two drums and a reed pipe and half a dozen men who jump up and down and stamp their feet. It grows wearisome in time. The guide suggests that at the Somali dance there will be women, and leads to a more noisome part of the town.

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A Somali dance consists of two drums and a reed pipe and half a dozen men who jump up and down and stamp their feet. But it is true there are women. They beat the drums, and sometimes they get up and jump and stamp their feet. It, too, palls as the festering minutes ooze on. The guide remains unabashed and says that it is the Sudanese dance that is his real *pièce de résistance*. A Sudanese dance consists of two drums and a reed pipe and half a dozen men who jump up and down and stamp their feet. Only here the women sit at opposite ends and hoot shrilly to one another at intervals. So much wickedness just bores an American. The guide demands fifty francs for his service, gets ten, and is satisfied.

One is not sorry at the prospect of taking the train out of Djibouti, even though it starts at the unnecessarily inconvenient hour of six-thirty next morning, and one has a lurking fear that some final afterthought of bureaucracy may yet delay one.

Into this town of disappointments and delays and adamant bureaus there came a German—calm, collected, and loaded down with a motion-picture camera and a full field equipment. Patent aluminum water barrels for mule pack travel. Indestructible fiber cases that nested into each other in diminishing sizes. A thing of sticks and joints and rubber that opened up to become a boat. And, of course, a full line of colorful chips in hermetic tins which would dissolve out into tasty foods. These and many other envied marvels. Some of these aids to African travel can be procured in London. Almost none in New York.

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One of the most pleasant aspects of travel is the great kinship of all travelers. The wanderer in the far places invariably develops a sympathy for his fellow-man in like circumstances. I hastened to warn this newcomer, therefore, of the obstructions which beset his path and which he must quickly set about overcoming if he hoped to catch that train.

And he thanked me and said yes, he knew all about those things; he had, in fact, come prepared. Special permits and passes had been issued to him as long as a month before, and he had nothing to do but board the train and go through. The German minister at Addis Abeba had supplied all the necessary information and obtained all the necessary documents, and the German consul at Djibouti was looking after the handling of his gear.

He had with him a set of German maps, four of them forty inches square each, mounted on linen, giving in detail the rivers and the hills and the caravan routes and the water-holes of the north and the south and the east and the west of Abyssinia. The best map of Abyssinia available in New York city, United States of America, was a sheet twelve by eighteen in size, corrected up to the ancient Kitchener survey. This is good for Americans to ponder upon.

This German knew enough of Amharic, the language of Abyssinia, to make his simple wants known. Where in all God's creation had he been able to acquire Amharic, I wanted to know, when back home, in what we like to call the world's most important city, a canvass of all the book-sellers had failed to find a single

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man who knew what was the meaning of that strange word Amharic. The amazingly well-equipped German was able to laugh. In Berlin, he told me, in the Staatsuniversität, in the department of Oriental languages, was a professor who taught Amharic.

This, too, is good for our *amour propre* to contemplate.

CHAPTER III

A LEISURELY RAILROAD

FROM Djibouti it is a three-day railroad journey by the French railway to get to Addis Abeba. For the train travels only by day, and passengers stop off for lunch at midway stations and for bed and dinner each evening. The reason for this leisure is that the hinterland Somalis are a people who have ever been turbulent; and that beyond them, in the Danakil foot-hills, lives a woolly tribe of spearmen called Dankalis, who regard the railroad with its telegraph wires as a heaven-sent supply of material out of which to make copper bracelets for their arms and hammered pot-leg slugs for their stolen rifles.

Some little while ago the railroad found the strain of keeping up the copper supply to be too heavy a drain on its working budget and decided to replace the looted sections with cheaper iron wire. The Dankalis, deeply wounded by this unsportsmanlike action, retaliated by coming down on moonlight nights and removing whole sections of track; and some of the young bloods invented the game of lying up on dark

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nights by the track and hurling their broad-bladed spears through the train windows, and then running, screaming with laughter, into the night.

So now trains run only by day; and at intervals along the track one sees tiny square block-houses with loop-holed walls. One can't help feeling that all this precaution is quite unnecessary, until one sees now and then somber Dankalis with shocks of matted hair leaning on their spears and thinking of what they'd like to do if they dared by day.

So each evening at the stop-over stations passengers are put to the inconvenience of bundling out of the train with every last item of baggage. For some strange Gallic reason it doesn't seem possible to let passengers off with just their overnight suit cases and to lock up the train, which stays right there on the track till next morning.

Each evening, as the train pulls up, the first-class car and the second-class car—there is only one of each—are besieged by a gang of yelling porters, Somalis, Arabs, Hindus, who climb in through the windows and fight with each other to grab whatever pieces of baggage they can and hand them out quickly to their confederates outside; and once outside and out of sight in the hands of these indiscriminate and unlicensed porters, who can guess how much of it will ever reach the hotel?

Passengers must fight back—physically to the extent of wresting their dunnage away from insistent pirates who understand neither English nor French, and who laugh hugely, thinking it a wonderful joke

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that a white man can curse them in frightful Arabic. When the fighting is over and the passenger is counting his rescued pieces, there comes a belated shabby Arab with a badge in his yellow turban who says: "I am hotel, Marshter. I got it man here."

This identical procedure happens at each stop-over; and experienced travelers of the road offer the coldly cynical explanation that the local unlicensed pirates have established the prerogative, under threat of dire beating, that the hotel runner should let them have their chance first.

The railway journey of three long days is deadly enough, though the cars are comfortable. First and second class are included in a single coach divided by a partition, and are identical in every way except that the fare is just half in the latter case; but, alas, the white man's prestige demands that he travel first.

The first day is one of parched heat, traversing the Somali plain, where dome-shaped ant-hills dot the desperate barrenness and miserable Somali huts look exactly like them. Long, well-beaten foot-paths wind away into the heat haze, and one wonders what these unhappy folk live upon and why; for there is no sign of water, and nothing grows round the huts. Yet one is not inclined to waste much sympathy upon Somalis, for they are the most gratuitously insolent people in all Africa.

In the mid-distances towering white columns ascend and drop abruptly, bringing a vague conjecture of smoke signals among the desert tribes, till the train passes right through one of them; and then the chok-

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ing sand-blast that envelops everything proves that they are not signals but whirling dust devils.

With the first evening the train begins to climb the foot-hills of Dira Dawa, where the frontier customs and a Greek hotel await one. The customs is a scuffling madhouse; for every article of hand baggage of every passenger must be opened and passed, even though it will all be carried back to the train next morning. First-, second-, and third-class passengers swear and struggle cheek by jowl; and it's first come first served, and no favors. For this custom-house is in Abyssinia, where the white man suddenly finds himself to be no longer lord of all he surveys.

In front of me with his elbow in my chest was a naked Somali, with something dead in a basket; and since his lungs were louder than mine, he got through first. At my side was an enormous amazon of a woman with nine evil-smelling babies in a basket, who scuffled and screamed louder even than did she herself in her insistence upon attracting the official's attention. The multitude of them held my attention and I watched interestedly till the customs man should pass them. The customs man was busy, so his assistant had to attend to the case. The assistant seemed to be some nondescript person taken on locally to fill the job *pro tem*. He must have been a Mohammedan, for he grunted an oath of disgust and spat upon the squalling things—and then it turned out that they were little brown pigs.

The hotel is a pleasant surprise, clean and cool, and situated in an oasis of orange-trees with flaming

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bougainvillea and pink honeysuckle climbing over the veranda trellises. The Greek who owns it is a brother-in-law or something to the Greek in Djibouti; so he knows just what prices to charge the rich Americans.

The next day—at an uncomfortable six-thirty again—the train begins to wind into rolling hills—winds with apparently unnecessary tortuousness, where a short trestle across an intervening dry watercourse would have saved, in many instances, as much as two or three miles.

Gazelles stand and gaze wide-eyed at the train, and iguanas scuttle into holes at the base of ant-hills, holes big enough to shelter a bear. It is explained by a Frenchman, one of the railway officials, who takes a proprietary pride in showing off the wonders of the country to strangers, that the protective instinct of gazelles urges them out into the desert places where there is no water to nourish the carnivores that might prey upon them; and that *le bon Dieu* has for this purpose bestowed upon gazelles the gift of never needing water. Following up this interesting theory, I couldn't refrain from asking him whether *le bon Dieu* had also endowed gazelles with the apparently equally necessary faculty of living upon sand and loose pebbles; and he replied with wise thoughtfulness that who could tell, perhaps they were able to extract some form of nutriment from the sand.

That day winds itself to a long-drawn close at Hawash, where the train suddenly turns a last bend and comes into a mimosa and cane forest, the drainage system of the Hawash River, a considerable stream

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that goes down and loses itself somewhere in the thirsty sand plain that we have just left; for it never reaches any sea.

The Greek at Hawash has received a telegram from his cousin the Greek at Dira Dawa and dinner is ready for us. He was in America during the war in the candy business, out of which, in seventeen months, he made enough money to buy in on his present wayside monopoly. He all but falls upon our necks and weeps.

Ah, America! Truly God's country, where money is so easy to make; where all the loved viands of his own country are to be had; where newspapers and theaters in his own language abound; where so many of his happy compatriots live. Cursed be the day that he had succumbed to a whim to revisit his patria; for now the quota was full and overbrimming and the waiting lists were more than a million long.

So the exile hails us as compatriots and makes us free of his pomegranate and papaya-trees.

From Hawash the train winds steadily up through good country. Rolling grass land and mimosa scrub. Bird life suddenly is prolific. Baboons sit up like Somalis and bark at the train. Guinea-fowl scratch in the dust with unconcern. Antelope offer shots impossible to miss. But the tawny things that move suggestively behind the bushes and that one hopes to be lions are only gaunt camels that seem to roam at will and belong to nobody. Local people tell us, however, that lions can be heard any night and that leopards are a pest.

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As the day wears on, game is less and stations are closer. We are reaching the wide-spread purlieus of Addis Abeba, where every man who is anybody has a smuggled rifle and a host of armed dependents and the country has been shot clean.

And still the train winds and winds and winds. Impatient Americans exclaim against the amazingly foolish distances which could have been avoided by just the tiniest bridge, and brag that an American engineer could have cut that road by at least one third. But an old-time passenger laughs and says:

"Not foolish, *mon ami*. For consider, I beg you. Is it not that much more money can be made in building a long distance than in building a short? And since it was the French Government that paid, *voilà*, what would you?"

One wonders why the French Government should pay for the construction of a railway into Abyssinia; and another passenger, a tall Russian, elevates his eyebrows cynically and remarks that the French Ministry of War is rich. The Frenchman glares at him and all the compartment laughs.

Evening draws near and some one presently points and says:

"Why, that must be Addis."

And so a cluster of whitewashed walls and galvanized-iron roofs among a eucalyptus forest turns out to be.

I personally was disappointed in the approach, for I had read accounts of the grandeur of the scene; and since the town stands at an elevation of eight thou-

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sand feet, I had expected something of the orchid-festooned gorges of Darjeeling in the Himalayas or the massive jaggedness of La Paz in the Bolivian Andes. But to Addis Abeba the rise is so gradual that, in spite of its eminence, the town has the appearance of being pleasingly situated in hilly country.

As the train squeals round the last curve and strains up the last rise, round wattle and daub huts with conical thatched roofs become more plentiful, till their quaintness, which was at first intriguing, merges into the commonplace and the commonplace into their real inherent squalor. Then everything is blotted out by clumps, by groves, by forests of Australian eucalyptus-trees. The train rolls through a tall avenue of clean-drug-store smell and stops opposite a twenty by thirty corrugated shed, which is the terminal station of Addis Abeba.

And then the fight with the howling hordes of porters begins again, till the Greek who owns the "Imperial" hotel arrives with a strong-arm squad and explains that his cousin the Greek has telegraphed from Hawash and that rooms are waiting for the distinguished Americans, who thus duly arrive at Addis Abeba, the capital of Abyssinia, and find, of course, that the best rooms in the hotel have long ago been reserved for their efficient German fellow-traveler and for the family of Armenians who were wise enough to travel up in the identical comfort and half the price of the second class.

All of the foregoing, then, has related how not to

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travel to Abyssinia. That is the way Americans must travel, who have no representation in the country and no means of finding out anything about it.

In Addis Abeba there is, as we have seen, a German legation. There are also a British legation, French legation, Italian legation, and Belgian legation, and there is a Greek consul and a Turkish consul.

It seems that as long as more than five years ago an American commission, investigating the situation, recommended to Congress or to the Senate, or whatever group of stanch patriots it may be that has the decision in such matters, that at least consular representation be sanctioned, on the plain economic grounds that this country of ten million people who dress entirely in cotton was very favorably attracted toward the import of American cotton goods and that it was a wide-open field for American machinery and automobiles. But the wise representatives of the American people, after weighty deliberation, decided that America was too poor to afford a consul in Abyssinia.

Then, in the course of ponderous political events, the question came up again about a couple of years ago; and another American of culture and vision recommended the appointment of a minister—an official, in short, who could uphold the dignity of America on an equal footing with the representatives of the other nations. When I left America the latest information was that the gentlemen in whose busy hands the welfare of our people lies, bemused with vote-gathering, had once again decided that the richest nation on earth was not in a position to consider or

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to take any action upon such an appointment just then.

But at last now—since I left Abyssinia—the glad news is that those gentlemen have been overruled and an American minister has been appointed. The Abyssinian people have received him with great rejoicing, and hopes run high that the appointment will result in far-reaching advantages of mutual benefit.

CHAPTER IV

EXPEDIENCIES OF EXPEDITIONING

HAVING arrived in Abyssinia at last, it seems meet to explain something about this expedition of exploration. Let the plain traveler who reads feel not that an expedition is something alien to his dilettante interests.

We are living in an era of expeditions. Not a month passes that we do not see photographs in the Sunday magazine sections of So-and-so's expedition to Such-and-such a place.

I have made many trips. I have been through Borneo. I have been into Tibet and Yunnan. I have crossed South America over the Andes and down the Amazon. And out of my experiences I have learned this secret: that the dignity of an "expedition" is largely dependent upon the publicity sense of the traveler. For an expedition need be no more than a trip to some place outside of the regular tourist routes.

There are, of course, expeditions and expeditions. There are the sober, serious journeys of men of science who risk their lives in the most noisome corners of the earth for the sheer love of their study and the advancement of knowledge. All honor to them. There are the equally strenuous travels of rich sportsmen

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who carry along scientific and collecting equipment with the laudable hope of adding something to science as a side-line to their sport. To them also I doff my hat in envy. There are the purely murderous jaunts of those—I can't call them sportsmen—who go out to kill as many beasts as possible and to bring home heroic photographs of themselves with their dead. And there are the "trips" of those, like myself, who fare forth to go-look-see; to prowl the places beyond the range of organized tours, and who have learned the trick of appropriating the more grandiloquent term to themselves.

There is a great deal of blah about many "expeditions." I hope to see many more plain travelers indulge in them. I hope to show how easy they are; how not necessarily dangerous they may be. One may be foolhardy, if one wishes, and may go and look for danger; or one may be cautious and run like the devil from it. I hope to show, particularly, how within reach of the ordinary traveler is an expedition in point of cost. No more, in fact, than a tour round the world. It will astound many people to know that this expedition into Abyssinia, lasting a year and including caravan trips into the interior and shooting large beasts—strictly for food or protection—cost—for two—less than six thousand dollars, of which a full third was expended in railway and steamship fares.

I make a plea for more expeditions for the ordinary traveler. The secret lies in knowing the ropes. I hope to expose some of the ropes.

One of the stoutest and most important of the ropes

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is motion pictures. All expeditions have motion pictures. For their publicity value is immense; and—sometimes—they make money. I introduce this good rope here at the beginning, because it must be very carefully arranged for before leaving home. Its value lies in the fact that motion-picture companies, like many travelers, stand in awe of the impressive word "expedition." There is no reason why they should not send their camera-men out quite independently to photograph all the wild men and queer beasts that they need. A few sturdy and bold camera-men go out on their own; they gamble the expense and take a little risk; and it is frequently they who bring back the gems of their art that startle and delight home audiences. Those are men who know the ropes.

But the desk-bound managers of the big companies are out of touch with these so necessary ropes. They sit hypnotized by the grandiose word, surrounding it with unknown difficulties and perils; and so they attach camera-men to other people's "expeditions" under some arrangement of paying a royalty of a dollar or so per foot of film used to the fearless organizer of the trip.

A beautiful rope, this, with golden tassels. Happily, the individual camera-men who know all the ropes are not many. So the opportunity for fearless organizers remains.

Arrived fearlessly, then, on an expedition into Abyssinia, one is surrounded by a thousand absorbing things to investigate. A fascinating people. A purely feudal system of government. Slaves who refuse free-

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dom. A ruler who traces his descent direct from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. A nation unique in having maintained its freedom as far back as its history reaches. The only people in Africa who have won a war and exacted an indemnity from a European power. Witchcraft and werewolves. And much more that one never hears of unless one digs very deeply indeed.

But they must wait, all of them. To a fearless adventurer in travel something more absorbing calls. There is a tale of a man-eating hippopotamus that demands attention to the exclusion of everything else. About six days' trek from the capital is a lake called Abiata, where a herd of hippopotamuses hide by day and come out at night to eat the villagers' barley and melons.

Arussi Gallas those people are; described by some explorers as being, with the Masai, the most warlike of the African tribes. Menelek the Lion, the great ruler who made an empire out of the constantly warring kingdoms of Abyssinia, conquered the Gallas. But those turbulent folk are not altogether convinced of the fact yet; and every now and then they rise up and kill a few people and make a sporadic attempt to run things just as they like to have them. It seems that at a near-by lake a party of Germans, exiles who had lost their all in German East Africa after the war, have been trying to establish a farm to raise coffee and cotton and some of the other things that grow so marvelously in the Abyssinian climate. There has developed there the old complication between native

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and settler, a question of cattle and grazing rights. We have been through the very same trouble in our own quite recent history. Every one of our Indian wars originated in the bad blood growing out of the question of whether the settler has more right to the land he has obtained by purchase or by government grant, or whether the Indian who was born there has the better right.

In this Galla case the immediate trouble arose over the matter of burning some grass. The settlers thought they had a right to burn it, and did. But the Galla tribesmen thought otherwise. So they sent out a war signal and chased the settlers away and burned their crop.

The settlers escaped into the capital with some minor spear wounds but otherwise whole. The German minister instantly lodged a fierce protest with the Abyssinian Government and put in a claim for stiff damages—for that is the function of ministers. The Abyssinian Government followed the usual procedure of governments in such cases and sent a couple of companies of soldiers to restore order, and with the punitive expedition a joint commission composed of a member of the German legation and an Abyssinian official to inquire into the causes of the fight and the damage done.

The result was identically similar to our own Indian war experience. The Gallas quietly took to the hills in the face of so strong an armed force. The expedition accomplished nothing, and the commission of inquiry returned with the report that the stiff in-

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demnity claimed by the settlers was very much over-estimated——And with this most intriguing story of the hippo.

It seemed that an old bull, tired of being shot full of pot-leg out of old *fusil-gras* rifles, had turned savage, as hippos sometimes will, and had bitten one or two canoes in two and horribly mangled several natives, who had come upon it on its nightly marauding trips and had tried to drive it out of their melon-patches.

Just six days' trek from the capital these things had been happening. In four days or five there would be a good usable moon. So, howsoever great their interest, the other things must needs wait. As for me, my field kit was in the duffle bags somewhere within those twenty-two cases. It remained only for rifles and guns to be cleaned of their sea rust, and I would swiftly hie me to go-look-see.

In the foregoing report of travel much has been said about the twenty-two cases of baggage. I can see the whole clan of travelers, would-be's as well as hardened veterans, sit up and snort their scorn. But I remain unashamed. I can explain every one of them.

Most of them comprise another stout rope for the expeditioning of the less financially fortunate ones. There exist fortunate men who desire to go to some place on a big-game trip. They have seen marvelous motion pictures of an African landscape simply crawling with big game. So they decide that Africa must be the place.

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For such men there exists Nairobi in British East Africa. They write a letter to such a man as my good friend Klein of Nairobi and tell him that the time they can snatch from their lucrative businesses permits them to arrive at such a date and to get out at such another date; and in the interim they want to trek inland and shoot an elephant and a lion and a rhinoceros and a giraffe.

Very good. They arrive with a couple of trunks of clothes. Klein meets them with an automobile. Without loss of time he takes them out in the automobile to a base camp, three, four, or five days distant. At the base camp are standing ready tents, horses, servants, and rubber bath-tubs. Klein has procured the hunting licenses in advance and will furnish rifles and camera-man, if required. His native trackers have reported that a herd of giraffe are feeding within four miles of sub-camp number three; that two male lions and a female are lying up in a kloof watching a herd of a hundred and fourteen beesteboks near sub-camp number two; and that nine elephants, five females and four tuskers, are browsing round sub-camp number four and that the old fellow with the torn ear and the scar on his flank has broken his left tusk short six inches from the root.

Good news, received with rejoicing. Swift orders are issued by Klein. The cook and his assistants hurl their pots into the station wagon and away they race to sub-camp number three. The field car comes round more leisurely for the hunters. Since the giraffe are much more likely to move off before the other beasts, number

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three is the first choice, and the elephants are postponed till next Thursday. And if, by some ill luck, they should have moved off, what matter? For Klein, mind you, guarantees at least a shot at all these beasts in the price of his contract.

But, ah, the price! There are among the fortunate ones those who are glad to pay Klein's price for the privilege of being able to present a stuffed elephant's head to their club. There are again others who do their own hunting. It is Klein's price that explains my twenty-two cases.

Tents, bed-rolls, blankets, cots, camp clothing, Coleman cook-stoves, and quicklite lamps—for there are none like them to be had anywhere in the world. Saddles, both riding and pack—for we have more experience in mule and burro packing than anybody else in the world, and there exists nothing to approach a Flynn pack saddle for gall prevention.

All these things come from America. There are other things, fiber and uniform cases and field filters and so on, which the British and Germans make better than we do, for they have more experience with African conditions. They both claim better guns too. And it must be conceded that they do make better game rifles; with the surpassing advantage in the British gun that ammunition for any one of the standard British rifles, thanks to the wonderful prevalence of British sportsmen, can be bought pretty well anywhere in the world.

Then come those one or two inevitable trunks that I always resent. One starts blithely for the desperate

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trails of darkest Africa. A few woolen shirts and socks and some strong boots and a bed-roll. All good comfortable stuff that packs close with a friendly feel. Those and the guns. One can lavish attention upon them and forgive them their weight.

But, and alas!—in order to get to the back trails of allure one must travel first in formal steamboats and through civilized towns, and one must stay at some jumping-off place or other to make up one's safari. —And may heaven forgive those last-stage residents for their conventions of dress that they have built up to be ikons.

There must be clothes. Exactly as many and as varied as though one were planning to stay in any capital of Europe. There must be shirts and collars and suits. And when one goes into the tropics there must be the additional burden of panama or other light suits. Above all, if one expects official help, one must call upon and later dine with officials; and officials in the far-away corners of the earth have built a religion out of dress suits. Those are the trunks that I look upon with loathing.

The impedimenta already enumerated ought to explain away twenty-two cases easily enough. But yet further and cogent excuse is forthcoming. I have mentioned the wilful lady who controls my comings and goings. Anybody who has traveled with a lady can explain away any quantity of trunks.

Having outfitted himself, then, with twenty-two cases of needful gear, how does the ambitious traveler go out on actual expedition into the untrodden wilds in-

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fested with large and ferocious beasts? Now, while I have been trying to show that expeditioning offers no insuperable difficulty to the ordinary traveler who wants to go off the beaten path, I remain far from wishing to convey the impression that there are no difficulties at all. There are plenty. Difficulties involving organization and tact and patience and the ability to laugh at the comedy of life rather than to regard it as Russian drama.

This jungle drama of the man-eating hippo is an example in point. The cast consists of, first and most important, the lady who won't be frightened off with stories of danger; next, my meek self; third, an unassuming white hunter and guide who knows even more ropes than we do; and last, supers.

The white hunter is one of those gems of purest ray serene born to waste his sweetness on the desert air. As he introduces himself in all his simplicity:

"I'm an old Africander, and I know my way about pretty well."

But there lie many volumes of romance behind that unpretentious recommendation. Twenty years in the African bush; driven from one lone fastness to another by the slow advance of civilization. South Africa, Rhodesia, British East, Angola, pre-war German East, Uganda, Somaliland, and now Abyssinia. From the staid respectability of trader and hunter to that awful crime against the British administration of its huge one third of Africa: the offense that causes tape-bound officials to foam their helpless indignation—ivory-poacher! And from that odium risen again to the latest

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and extreme eminence of gun-runner, flouting thereby the high-handed decree that arms shall not come into free Abyssinia.

Of course, his reputation among the law-abiding white community is as frightful as is always to be expected, and is inevitable in a small alien community where everybody knows everybody else's business and has little else to do but mind it with a watchful eye. For a small white community in a large foreign city is as isolated as is Main Street in the vastness of the Middle West. My good guide's own legation repudiates him with official horror. His countrymen warn me solemnly one by one. Busybody nobodies who have zealously kept the eleventh commandment lift their eyebrows and exclaim: "What, you're thinking of taking that man?" and wait eagerly for me to demand, "Why not?" Which I don't.—Leaving them to volunteer their informative warning with the effusive solicitude of small-town residents for the stranger within their gates.

And it all amounts to the usual slogan of Main Street. "Of course, I have nothing against the man personally. But So-and-so says. . . ."

Serious investigation—since one must be so desperately careful about one's trail companions—elicits nothing more definite than what seem to be distinct recommendations—ivory-poaching and gun-running. Such a man ought to know his way most efficiently about the untrodden wilderness. So "Jim" is duly engaged, and rolls up his sleeves and pitches in with a wealth of advice born of his experience of men and

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mules and supplies and contracts and sureties and all the tangle of paraphernalia that belong with an Abyssinian safari—though the white folks in Abyssinia have adopted the old Boer word for it. Trekking on mule caravan, they call it.

This is to be only a small caravan; for, after be-draggling all across Europe with the horror of twenty-two cases, we are grimly determined to go light. Yet we can't cut it down to less than the awful total of three riding mules and ten pack mules and all the inconceivable mess and intricate formality of trekking.

To begin with, one must first obtain a permit from the minister of the interior to go traveling anywhere in the country; otherwise one is stopped at various unexpected district frontiers by petty local governors, who refuse further passage without first seeing a royal passport. Jim opines that a permit to go down among those ferocious Galla tribes, from where a punitive expedition of soldiers has just returned, will not be granted; for it is the nature of governments to be timorous of trouble with foreigners. But, says Jim further, with a grin: "What do we want permits for? All those interfering local officials will have been scared far away from their dens by this uprising. There'll be nobody to worry us. We'll just make a bluff to our servants that we've got permits and we'll sneak down."

The deciding vote lies with the adventurous lady who casts the die.

"D'you think it will be all right?" she asks me.

I pass the buck to Jim.

"Shucks," he says. "I know those Gallas. They're

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good friends of mine. Their private fights with other people don't have to affect us. I'd go through their country empty-handed."

I relay the information to my lady and add my own bold assurance that of course it will be all right. So she decides that we go, and hang the permits.

Here a contretemps arises which, since we are furnishing an exposition of the ropes of expeditioning, must be set forth as a tall sign-post of warning. Let the expeditionist who hopes to lean against the rope of motion pictures be most wary about the conditions of his arrangement with the company. Let him particularly see to it that he, the leader of his own expedition, is the boss: that the underling who turns the camera crank is under his orders, to go where he goes and to do what he says.

This is a difficult provision to insist upon with any motion-picture company. For, they try to maintain at the earnest behest of their camera-men, what do mere expedition leaders—harebrained scientists, ignorant authors, and such—know about the delicate and intricate art of shooting a motion picture?

Their attitude is ingrained in them and is inherited from their fathers in the beginning days of "fillum." It is part of the gigantic bluff that the motion-picture fraternity have been putting over on the rest of the world ever since the inception of their overpaid sinecures—a bluff that is being rapidly torn from the security of its intrenched mystery by the advent of the "Filmo" and half a dozen other sixteen-millimeter



A SOMALI RESIDENCE



THE BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK

There is more profit in riding to one's prospects than in sitting by the wayside and hoping for them to pass.



**A LADY RIDES WITH HER FACE COVERED FROM
THE VULGAR GAZE**

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movie cameras. Thousands of amateurs who stood formerly in awe before the legendary blah of film go forth to-day with their sixteen-millimeters and shoot excellent stuff.

All this is not intended to establish a claim that an amateur is as good, or has the same judgment of commercial picture values, as a professional. But it most emphatically is a claim that the ordinary traveler is not, when compared to a camera-man, a mental defective.

Mr. Ordinary Citizen who decides to magnify his travel into an expedition is perfectly competent to exercise a reasonable amount of judgment as to what subject matter offers interest to millions of other ordinary citizens just like himself. Nor will he, since his own profit is involved, attempt to exercise a pig-headed judgment against all the arguments of the camera-man. But he should, and must, insist that if a camera-man goes with his expedition his decision as to the route of his expedition is to be final; and that the crank-twirler, vaunting his alleged superior judgment of film values, shall not have the right to refuse to follow him.

Let this word be a warning of much worth to the wise. Let the skeptic talk with other expeditionists and get their views upon the genus crank-turner. The leader of an expedition must insist that he leads.

As did not I.

My camera gentleman came along on a loose sort of gentlemen's agreement that turned out to be so loose as to be positively wabbly. When the discussion arose

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as to whether we should immediately set forth on caravan into that Galla country from which certain other foreigners had just escaped but a few frantic leaps ahead of sharp and shiny spear-points, the photographic expert decided that there existed no commercial film values at all down in that crazy country, and that his time would be better employed in filming manners and customs in the safe and sane city. Quite regretfully he pointed out that his duty to his company that was maintaining him there at vast expense compelled him to study their interest first. Now duty, of course, as we have all known since our copy-book days, is a sacred unpleasantness. And so, of course, the high-priced expert stayed in the city.

Writing *post facto*, it is not irrelevant comment that, out of twelve thousand feet of commercial film values reeled in by this expert, his company was able to put to commercial use just two hundred feet.

The forewarned expeditionist may well, without being oversanguine, hope to achieve a better percentage.

It is a rather similar problem with the supers, the "boys"—mule men, tent boys, cook, gun-bearers. These necessary folk, unlike my fearless lady, have never grown to have a comforting dependence upon my personal prowess, nor in Jim's. That Galla country is full of tall, fierce men with spears, they insist, and they have no foolhardy ambitions to go a-sporting. It might be all right for Frangis; but Gallas are a turbulent folk, and many of them don't properly believe yet

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that they have been subdued by Menelek the Lion, and none of them really love camp boys. Boys must have double pay to go down into the Arussi; and there must be a whole lot of them. No less than a round score of them to attend to the needs of three white folks and thirteen mules.

With haggling and persuasion and promises of protection the number is reduced eventually to a dozen. No high-handed appeal to a commissioner to supply labor; no threats here, as might be the case over all the rest of Africa. For be it remembered this is free Abyssinia, and the white man is not master. Boys will work for hire; but if at any time they don't like their jobs they can just pack up and leave the expedition to its fate.

So a system has grown up in Abyssinia whereby boys hire out under contracts, signed and sealed with a thumb-mark. And since the individual boy will be an irresponsible to whom a contract means nothing, each one must bring a guarantor, some person of substance in the town who will sign and thumb-print with the boy, and who can then legally be held accountable for his protégé's good behavior and honesty. There is in Abyssinia a thriving business done in guarantees. It is quite as formal and much more complicated than bonding a cashier for a bank. And, this being Africa, it takes its full and proper time.

A week is spent in finding boys brave enough to go into the Arussi, and by them in finding guarantors reckless enough to thumb-print with them. And then having duly signed, sealed, and delivered themselves

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into hire for a certain pay, they institute the age-old pastime of bargaining for themselves.

One boy has no shoes and he can't go into the bush barefooted. He persists in his refusal to budge out of town, contract notwithstanding, till the very last minute—and then he produces shoes from under his voluminously draped *shamma* and is in no way ashamed. Another will surely get sunstroke in the hot and low-lying lake region without a hat. Another must have an advance of pay to leave with his mother, who is sick and will probably die during his absence. Another has a debt which he must pay, otherwise he will be caught and chained to his creditor before leaving town.

These are only the beginnings of the trials attendant upon a trek.

Then mules. It is a question of permanent argument amongst those who go on caravans whether to buy or to hire. To buy, one must be a financier. Mules are the inexorable necessity of travel and they cost accordingly. Twice as much as horses, which are foolish, delicate things, well enough for riding about town; but which can't stand a grueling day after day on grass feed. Plain pack mules, and with sore backs at that, cost between thirty and forty dollars; and riding mules run into anything that one can afford to pay for that prime requisite of a saddle mule—gait. Rich men will spend as much as three hundred for a fast ambler. But these pearls of their kind are not for ordinary citizens who travel, and particularly not for caravans into the bush. As much as fifty dollars, perhaps,

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one would have to pay for a good serviceable trek saddle mule.

The alternative is a nagadi. Nagadis are God's lowest creatures. They are not—let it be stated at once—Abyssinians. That is to say, they are not of the pure Amhara ruling race. They are a mixed nondescript nomad people whose business is with pack animals.

There is a most curious, and universal phenomenon attaching to those who deal with that most useful and rather inoffensive beast, the horse. Everybody knows many stories hinging upon the astuteness of the genus horse-trader. Tales of the slipperiness of the race-track have been bruited abroad. Scandals about army remounts have not been unknown.

If such unsavoriness can drape itself round that gentle creature, the horse, consider what wickedness can accumulate round a mule; and what sheer unbridled vice must as a matter of course surround any dealings with a camel.

Nagadis are people who contract to hire themselves out with any or all three of these beasts by the day or week or month, with thumb-prints and guarantors galore among their own breed and waiting round the corner. And then they know every trick of their amazing law and every subterfuge of ape cunning to ignore every item of their contract.

They will without hesitation gang together and sign up to travel wherever their hirer says and whenever he says and as far as he says, and to make camp at whatever spot he may select. And then they will do

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exactly as they please for as long as the hirer can tolerate them and stay out on trek.

They have many evil generations ago outgrown the petty tricks of "sick" and "bad water farther on" and "tired mules." Such excuses are crudities, good enough for the simple wiles of such unenlightened schemers as Arabs or wily Hindus. No; nagadis will come humbly and request a short halt in order that they may rearrange loads that have been knocked off-balance and are galling the mules. And then they will unload the whole caravan with leisurely stealth and will neglect to hobble the most elusive of their beasts, and will spend the rest of a good afternoon in a fruitless pretense of trying to catch them again—until the frenzied white man will admit that it is too late to go any farther that day.

Or they will organize a sudden hubbub and will come running to announce that a duffle bag or something has been torn off a pack by a thorn bush somewhere back on the trail; and the whole caravan must wait, of course, while they go and look for it. Then when they feel that the helpless foreigner is convinced of the futility of going farther, they will produce it from the scrub patch where they have hidden it. And as often as not some thief, "some passing Galla," they will declaim with virtuous disgust, will have pilfered something out of the package while it lay on the trail far from their stanch protection.

While we yet debated the question of purchase or hire, a tired and dispirited man told me how a unique collection of photographic negatives, representing

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three years of patient labor, was "swept away by the torrent" while crossing a three-foot-deep ford, just because he had been foolish enough to pack a coveted Mauser pistol in that particular case.

And what could he do? What can anybody do who must needs traffic with the nagadi creature? This particular man admitted frankly that he just wept; and he put away his camera and all his apparatus and had never had the heart to take a photograph since.

And that is just about all that one can do. Except, being forewarned, to see that one is forearmed as well as may be possible—to have, in short, an old-time ivory-poacher and gun-runner as mentor, and to superintend, to follow, to watch; to be ever on the alert against a completely conscienceless force that holds all the odds.

Which is what we did. . . . Jim, with all his experience of the nagadi brute, and I, with whatever knowledge I had gathered about the guile of men in the wickeder corners of the earth. To buy mules was out of the question. At all events for such a trip. We would be buying in the capital city, the most expensive market at the most expensive time. We would be taking our beasts to an outlying district, the cheapest market—and where nobody had any currency anyway.

Even were we to bring them, all of them, alive back to the capital, we would be coming in shortly before the beginning of the rainy season, when nobody would be buying mules. Everybody, on the contrary, would be trying to sell in order to avoid the expense of keeping and feeding their beasts through a period when

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travel would be at a standstill, cut off by a thousand foaming yellow torrents in a country-side where the bridges have yet to be built.

So we set our teeth and hired nagadis. And we plotted and planned with elaborate detail, Jim and I, to be wary as serpents and to circumvent the forces of Apollyon on their own ground. In which we succeeded only partially. That is to say, that, establishing the principle of believing nothing that the nagadis ever said under any circumstances, and of going counter to their wishes and suggestions on every possible occasion, we did not actually lose any baggage. But the wear and tear on our nerves and the incessant irritation of the brutes all but succeeded in ruining the trip.

But "even Evil hath its end." The details of nagadi and boy hire were completed at last. The final arrangement was five nagadis with their mules and seven camp boys, whom we planned to divide into two parties and play against each other to our own benefit. That meant separate food, separate blankets, and boys' tent. But it was well worth it to our own peace of mind.

CHAPTER V

THE TRACKLESS WASTES

THE caravan got away with no worse unpleasantness than that the nagadis turned up at the eleventh hour with sore-backed mules, despite the quite irrelevant fact that their contract stipulated well-healed beasts—for there are no caravan mules in all Abyssinia that have not been pack-galled at some time or other—and that the mules that had been previously inspected and accepted had been decently free of sores.

The nagadis, faced with the irrefutable fact of sore backs, merely retired behind the animal obstinacy that they had acquired through long association with their beasts. These were the self-same animals, they swore by the bones of their fathers; we had only omitted to notice their condition; and—well, what could the stranger in a strange land do?

This is a favorite trick, and always the last lowest card played by nagadis. At the final hour, when all preparations are made and it will cost considerable expense to delay, they will ring in inferior animals. And if the caravaneer insists upon his contracted rights, they will give in with an ill grace.

But they will extend the delay into three or four

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days while they are "buying" new mules—just as a matter of holding their own end up in the inevitable war between traveler man and nagadi beast.

In this case the nagadis won. Time and expense counted with us. The rainy season waited for no man and our finances were not in the fortunate class. We accepted the inferior mules with a grim oath that we would get even with the nagadis—which we never succeeded in doing.

Six days' trek distant was the rumored lake of our desire where roamed the fierce hippo that ate men and canoes. Six long and hard days, each of seven and eight hours asaddle. Let those who know saddles and the poignant pleasure of breaking in after a long period of enervating chairs accord to us a full measure of sympathy.

Particularly to my adventurous lady, who had never bestriden animal before and whose "guaranteed quiet" mule brought by the nagadis bolted on the very first day out and threw her into a mimosa thorn patch. A fall that, besides scratches, left a bruise as big as a plate. Yet no misfortune is without a certain measure of compensation. The joy arising out of this accident was that I beat a nagadi.

I must fain pause here to give grudging credit to my lady—for she will admire and read this book if nobody else does. I can almost imagine that there exist fair daughters of Eve who, after being thrown by a mule into a mimosa thorn bush, would consider it their feminine right to take a long rest of a week or so and to demand a certain amount of attention thereto. But

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ambition to be an exploress must be made of sterner stuff. My admirable lady had her dizzy spell and then got up and rode—many long miles and hours to that night's camp. I must e'en pause again to give myself well-earned credit for excellent training of the better nine tenths.

But what was the need, indignant feminists will demand, for such long and tortured marches during those first days? The answer is, because the law of the bush is simple and inexorable. From water to water.

Ghostly country that. A vast alluvial plain between far brown humps of volcanic ridges to east and to west. Sloping gradually southward to where a jumbled chain of wide-spreading shallow lakes persists in spite of six months of rainless heat. Geologically speaking, I believe that this must be the beginning of the Great African Rift that continues on through lakes Rudolf and Tanganyika.

I don't know whether it is correct to speak of alluvial silt. But that is what this interminable valley seems to consist of. Good black earth, rich enough to grow anything that man needs—if only man could provide water. And there will never be any means of providing water without some well planned scheme of irrigation depending upon storage of the vast oceans of water that fall in the rainy season and tear great impassable gullies in the landscape as it rushes to waste. With such storage and irrigation—a Russian agricultural expert has estimated—those miles of desiccated plain could be made into a grain-producing area that would rival the United States and would have the advantage

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of cheap labor. But in the dry season even the far mountain ridges are burnt brown and arid. Wells can be dug, and at depths of from forty to sixty feet water of a drinkable brackishness can be found. But wells cannot adequately supply water for agriculture.

At a place called Modjo, where the railroad winds its tortuous track down to the coast, a brown little river struggles through its gorge that it has scoured out of the earth in its recurrent periods of monsoon might. Here a hospitable German, whom the war robbed of his all in what used to be German East Africa, has built himself a homestead and is planting out a farm to supply the needs of the capital.

It seems that he has experimented with nothing yet that doesn't thrive. It must be remembered that the altitude is high enough to grow all the European fruits. His property is somewhere between six and seven thousand feet high; and here apples and pears and peaches wax fat. Alongside of them are semi-tropical papayas and pomegranates, with oranges and lemons. A patch of Egyptian cotton yields bolls that look like those that the railroad officials display in New York to attract people to go South—and this man had never heard of a boll weevil. Coffee is the identical grade that comes to us out of Abyssinia, under the trade name of long berry mocha. Temperature stands at around a fairly constant 68 degrees.

And this man, having done all this, having wrested his oasis out of the forbidding wilderness—what do you think is his ambition?

To sell it all and come to America. He would keep

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visiting Americans for so many weeks as they could afford time to stay, just so that he might talk to them about their country; and he embarrasses omniscient authors by asking persistent questions about the price of five acres of land somewhere not too far from a town, and about the merits of raising hogs as against going farther South and trying fruit; or about what is there to all this advertising he sees in occasional American magazines relating to breeding silver foxes and being your own boss.

All that I could tell him about these bucolic pursuits is that farmers in America seat and unseat presidents according to the amount of governmental relief accorded to their perennial distress, and that advertisements about silver foxes are to be regarded as warily as those about growing mushrooms in your cellar. My impression gathered from recurrent wails in the press is that the high cost of farm labor is driving millions of farmers into cities. I don't know what is the cost of farm labor in America; but I felt safe in assuring this eager would-be citizen that it is twenty times as high as his own. He pays his men all of three dollars a month, and their day lasts as long as God's good sun lets it.

Possibly some harassed farmer in America, reading all the foregoing manifest recommendations, would like to effect an exchange with this gentleman.

I met another German farmer in an outlying district where coffee propagated itself so confoundedly persistently that it interfered with his cattle grazing; and where his labor cost him six dollars and a cotton

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bed-sheet for a suit per year, and where men would come and ask to be allowed to work gratis for six months to show their worth before being taken on.

This man does not want to sell.

But this is digression. It is easier to write about the pleasant things than about the downright uncomfortable and mean.

And mean is but a gentle term to apply to the business of trekking through that long valley. One leaves the hospitable German oasis with a qualm at the arid prospect before one; and in fifteen minutes one is enmeshed in the desperate thorn bush.

Dusty black-brown earth; parched yellow-brown clumps of sparse grass; starved gray-brown straggling mimosa scrub. And thorns. Gods of torture, what thorns! Nothing thrives except thorns. Stunted spicy trees, with the minimum of tiny leaves that offer no shade, struggle for their desiccate lives just far enough apart to permit of picking one's way between them on mule back and just close enough together to insist upon a ceaseless vigilance of swaying and ducking under and fending off with a stick the long tough branches that reach out in horizontal confusion, waiting to tear themselves across a rider's face.

All the meager nourishment that this pestilential scrub has been able to draw from the shriveled soil seems to have been concentrated in its thorns. Long, robust spikes with stout, bulbous, velvety bases. Two and three inches long, tapering away to fire-hardened points, diabolically designed not to break off but to dig into clothing and underlying flesh and to rip like

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nails in a board fence. A scrub perfected by nature for no purpose but offense.

In among this scrub appears every here and there a slender green-stemmed vine with shiny heart-shaped leaves. Invitingly green and cool to behold in that maze of dried-up thorn. A treacherous jest of tortured nature. This is the deadly "wait-a-bit." Its thorns are small and rose-bushy; but warped by an ingrowing hate against their fate in being condemned to such company, they are hooked backward. And the vine is wire cable and the thorns tempered steel. When wait-a-bit drops a coil across mule or rider one waits. There is no dragging through or shaking clear. The cable must be unwound.

Then, towering here and there over the dwarfed scrub like protective umbrellas, are flat-topped acacias, so typical of African scenery. Acacia thorns, since some of the substance of the soil has gone into the tree, are not quite so fatly nourished as those of the stunted mimosa, but they are similar in texture and evil temperament.

At wider intervals in the maze of thorn growth, sometimes singly, sometimes in stark, repellent groups, are massive thirty-foot candelabra cactuses with poisoned thorns projecting at every two inches of each ridge of their thick, five-sided, fleshy leaves.

That is all. That is the "bush" of upland Abyssinia. One picks a lacerated way through it and comes to the age-old wondering of why pestiferous things exist in such profusion in God's world. Of what use is any of this growth? Is it barely possible that the natives,

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in their struggle to maintain life, have discovered some arduous method of extracting some sort of service out of it? Inquiry of those who know the country elicits an answer in the disgusted negative. It seems that none of this pest growth is of any known use to man. Not even for fire-wood. The natives prefer to use their meager collections of cattle chips.

One is forced to the conclusion that trekking through mimosa scrub is one of the preparatory tests that the gods of adventure impose upon their foolish devotees. Time drags as interminably as mule travel always must. One ruminates tortuously about coining a new proverb; something about pack mules and tortoises. Plodding, patient beasts, four miles an hour is the best that can be expected of a pack caravan; and that only when the going is good. Saddle mules might be beaten into a short and exhilarating gallop of as much as fifty whole yards where occasional breaks in the bush would allow it. But the second most inexorable law of the bush is that one must never for a single moment leave the packs out of sight with those nagadis. So something less than an average of four miles an hour is the pace.

The guide winds away to left or right, making long and needless detours, it would seem, where the bush in front offers no worse going. One becomes obstinate in one's own sense of direction and forges stubbornly ahead. Till one finds one's self suddenly on the brink of a sheer cleft, a jagged knife gash in the plain, perhaps thirty feet across and twice as many feet deep. It is dry just now; as dry as everything else in that

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brutal valley. But when the rain will one day fall on one of those burnt brown mountains away to the west the gash will become suddenly a foaming mill-race with drowned cattle floating in it.

One curses the gash spitefully and admits grudgingly that the guide was right in the first instance, and tries to speed up and catch up with him as best as one may. Thorn bush is not sympathetic toward speeding up. One pays for one's hasty obstinacy.

Seven hours of this. Tempers are like crackling match-wood. No alertness of attention, no skill of swift bending and dodging suffices to traverse some twenty miles of thorn bush without scathe. One wonders, what do women do who cannot curse loudly and who must not swear at a vicious scratch across the cheek? I look at my lady and conceive a certain admission of respect for feminine patience.

Yet trekking through the mimosa scrub, like the scriptural evil, is not without end. The guide points with his chin and grunts—he is too trek-weary to talk:

“There's the Hawash.”

The Hawash is the next water. That means camp. Drink. Heavenly relief from the saddle. Rest. And later, perhaps, food—though food is an unappealing matter of little consequence just now. One looks as eagerly in the direction pointed as must the whole of Xenophon's ten thousand at the cry of “Thalatta!” But one sees nothing of course. The Hawash River is sunken fifty feet below the plain level in the ravine that it has carved for itself.

But presently there impinges upon one's weariness

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a consciousness of trees. Tall trees, different from the flat-topped acacias that have made the horizon of a whole aching day. These are huge and round. Upon closer approach they are seen to have leaves. Real wide juicy leaves. And there is movement in them. Live things. Tiny leaping bugs that develop, as one approaches, into monkeys. They curse the unexpected intrusion on the privacy of their supper and scatter to other, farther trees.

There is a whole long line of these splendid trees. Wild fig they are, with vast wide-spreading branches knotted with their queer clusters of fruit that grow apparently on the bark.

And there at the base of their great twisted roots is the deep gash in the earth. Mud-rimmed and flat and dirty and beautiful, the Hawash River. Two feet deep and fifty wide and full of crocodiles. But real, wet, liquid water.

And on the other side would be camp. Tired and sore though man and beast are, we must contrive to hustle the caravan through the mud and on to the high bank on the other side. For Jim, hardened old Africander, has a rule, even in the dry season. "Always cross a river when you come to it," he says, "'cause you never know what may happen overnight."

And Jim is right. In the African bush freak things happen. Though this is a season of utter desiccation, it can come to pass that somewhere, several hundred miles away, some queer commingling of heat and electrical concentration and air vortices can cause a sudden splitting open of the skies and a lashing downpour of

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chill rain. And then overnight a shallow river will swell to a twenty-foot-deep fury of brown whirling water; and foolish travelers may have to wait for three or four days before it will once again be fordable.

An interesting point about this Hawash River is that, while lower down it becomes quite one of the largest in Abyssinia, it never reaches the sea. It is known to get down somewhere into the deserts of Dankalia and then nobody knows what happens to it. Its fate has never been explored; but the theory is that it is entirely absorbed by the thirsty sand.

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FIRST night camp is always of interest. At all events, to those who make it. Confusion, of course, is to be expected in a first camp. Very many times have I been a first-nighter; and each time I have made oath that I would profit by past experience and that everything would be in its proper pack and every pack in its proper place and that nothing would be forgotten. And never have I achieved the perfect first night out.

But this camp was beyond the lowest deep of degradation for amateur bungling. My own excuse to cover my shame was that I had never trekked in Africa before, and it was quite impossible for me, of course, to conceive even a glimmering dream of the talent that the African boy has for doing the wrong thing at the wrong time and putting the wrong thing in the wrong place.

Jim, on the other hand, had always traveled with the minimum of what he called luxurious equipment. He traveled continents with the least necessary number of mules and a couple of hard-trained, experienced boys, and he hadn't given consideration to the mathe-

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matical truth that ten boys together are a hundred times more idiotic than just two.

And to help things be cheerful it was dark, of course, by the time the whole caravan of mules had been persuaded, hauled, or beaten into sliding down the steep mud bank of the Hawash ravine and across the river.

The manner of crossing a river with mule pack is worthy of description. The bank, to begin with, is some fifty or sixty feet deep. The soil is clay, and there is sufficient moisture of evaporation to keep its surface slippery. The mules arrive, look once over the edge, and immediately, with wise foreboding born of past experience, turn and try to bolt. But the nagadis, also with past experience, are looking out for this. With their staves they beat their mules over the face and head them off. Then by main strength and pulley haul they hustle one of them to the edge and with a crafty swipe of a staff cut its front legs from under it, so that it falls forward on its chest with forefeet over the brink.

After that even a mule usually gives up, and gingerly, wisely, edges forward till it sits on its tail with wide-spread hoofs and slides smoothly down to the water's edge. There more nagadis and camp boys await it, and immediately, before it can stop and think very much, so belabor it that it would rather face the crocodiles than the sticks, and it forthwith scurries across. Meanwhile the watchful explorer man waits with ready rifle to discourage lurking saurians.

Thirteen mules take just thirteen times as long to

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drive over a river as does one mule. Men follow in a gang with a vast splashing and shouting and firing off of guns to frighten away the crocodiles.

So, of course, it is dark by the time the caravan is ready to consider camp. You who have been caught by summer twilight with an auto or a little canoe full of camp gear, consider a caravan of ten packs in the dark.

But I must admit a moon. A thin moon rose presently on our swearful scrabbling among duffle bags and tent pegs and acres of canvas and miles of rope; and then we were able to see where the nagadis had unloaded the mule that we told them to unload at our elbow, and where else some boy had carried a pack we had been sitting upon a moment before.

I had brought a patent one-pole and four-peg tent, guaranteed to go up in less than five minutes—and, as a matter of fact, I had put up that same tent, single handed, in seventy-two seconds during a speed test. With the help of three African boys that night it was more than three quarters of an hour from the time we started till cots were opened up and blankets unrolled.

Jim's tent was one of those eight by nine wall tents, requiring the standard two poles and ridge and twelve pegs to set it up; and over that a fly that required fourteen more pegs and an African plain to give it rope room. Yet it stood, fly and all—drunkenly, but it stood—in less than half the time mine had taken.

And the explanation of the phenomenon was that ten generations of travelers had been teaching boys

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in Africa how to set up just that kind of antiquated tent; and it would take just as many more generations to establish the necessary hereditary familiarity with any modern improvement.

Food was a matter of little interest that night. We were all too tired; and the only utensil that the cook could find was the coffee-pot. So we made a brew in it of Hawash mud and tea, which tasted accordingly; we ate some bread and clammy sausage—a last-minute purchase, because Jim's two dogs had eaten all the bacon; we looked at the awful litter of ten mule loads of gear lying everywhere and anyhow, more or less within the square formed by our tents and the two belonging to the nagadis; and we cursed it all and went to bed.

And then the nagadis pegged out a rope and brought all the mules in and tethered them in a line right in the middle of our *laager*. At this I raised a weary protest from within my tent; for I emphatically did not see the need of waking up in a stable. But I was told, oh, no, it was a very necessary precaution indeed, as I would probably soon see.

As, of course, I did.

From far away sounded a gruff *haugh-haugh*, which circled and came nearer. Jim crinkled up his nose and chuckled.

"Hear that? If we're lucky it might come close enough to get a shot at it. I've known 'em come right into camp and grab a dog. Make a nice coat for the lady."

The fearless lady in a thin voice wanted to know

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what it was that coughed in spite of a nice coat. Jim reassured her that it was only a leopard hunting and that a shot-gun loaded with a ball shell was the best thing for them when they came right close.

But a leopard is a cautious brute. There were too many men and too much moonlight for its courage. It sheered off, and we could hear its grunting cough edge away down-stream to where a sand-bar gave shelter to a swamp, in the hope of scooping up a big bull-voiced frog or two.

Then a troupe of beastly hyenas came and prowled round the *laager* and howled at exact intervals like hungry fog-horns, paying not the least attention to the dogs that barked themselves frantic and raced up and down well within the limits of our square, not daring to go out and attack them.

Now I have always heard and read that hyenas are cowardly beasts that live entirely upon carrion; and probably that is true of the lowland striped species. But the upland Abyssinian hyenas are great spotted brutes that will tear down a straggling mule single handed and that every now and then get away with native children. They seem to be the particular pest of Abyssinian travel, and they are the cause of endless trouble and delay.

There is nothing laughable about them. No "laughing hyenas" these. Their howl is a raucous, *whroo-oo-oo-ee-eeh*, with all the volume and far-reaching quality of a Long Island Sound fog signal.

I crawled out of my blankets to see whether I could catch a glimpse of my first Abyssinian hyena. But white

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moonlight in the mimosa scrub and black shadows beneath were all my reward. Later that night, when the thing seemed to be howling right within the *laager*, Jim got out and "got a shot" at it, the only effect of which was to chase the brute to howl a little farther off round the back of our tents.

And then my intrepid exploress very nearly succeeded in keeping me awake, wanting to know whether hyenas could burst through tent canvas, and whether they liked to eat people, and whether my various weapons were handy, and what should one do if one came in. I think I told her in my sleep that one ought swiftly to climb the tent pole; and I forget how often she woke me up to tell me that she could hear it sniffing at the back of our tent.

And so "the evening and the morning were the first day." It was not a good day, that first one.

And the second day was like unto it. Except that we made a short trek that day, because my lady's bruise was dark purple and had stiffened from her fall of the day before. So we camped near a Galla village of a dozen huts within a thorn fence, because we knew that where there was a village, water must be somewhere. Three lean men dressed in raggedy cowhide kirtles came out and looked at us, standing on one leg and leaning on their spears. They were suspicious at first, but not unfriendly. The recent fighting had been far from them.

I have never understood that village. It was in the middle of nowhere at all. The flattest, the most shadeless, and the hottest portion of all that plain. And

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the water-hole was one long mile and a half distant; and it was the worst water that I have ever drunk anywhere in all my life. "It was crawling and it stunk" to the ultimate limit of human consumption. Straining through a handkerchief disclosed slimy things with myriad tiny legs in it, and the coffee that we boiled in it had all the wholesome aroma of a cow byre.

That second one was not a very good day either.

CHAPTER VII

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BUT improvement began to come after the second day. Possibly because we were beginning to grow to fit the lumpy shapes of our respective saddles; possibly because we broke camp at midnight and traveled by the cool of the moon; possibly because the country really began to be better. Going gradually lower and nearer to the beginning of the lake system, we began to come to wide stretches of low-lying country which would be impassable swamps of mud in the rainy season and now were almost moist and green. There was a pleasant little river for a long rest over the heat of the day; and evening saw us at the shores of a vast lake.

At least, Jim said that a lake was there. But all that was visible was a solid mile deep of tall papyrus swamp and a reedy puddle out of which we snatched our coffee water before the caravan mules got into it.

But there were evidences of a lake somewhere beyond the papyrus barrage. Mosquitos as soon as dusk fell, Jersey size and African disposition, that stung clear through cord riding-breeches. The night was full of the swish of low hurtling wings; and of a

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long, wailing cry that was not hyenas. Hunting dogs, the boys said, worse than hyenas. And then with the brightness of the moon, the honk of fleets of automobiles passing overhead.

Distinctly there was a lake somewhere. But not our lake; not the water that we were aiming for where the big hippo conducted his raids.

And the early moonlight start was a mistake; for we had, perforce, to travel along a wide stretch of open slope between the papyrus and the bush fringe that marked where the lake came up to when it rained; and the mosquitos of all North Africa found out about it at once.

But there were compensations. With the dawn, large ground-hugging creatures that had looked like sleepy rabbits turned out to be fat brown geese that walked sedately in pairs and refused to fly until the dogs chased them. Guinea-fowl clacked inanely and ran with the speed of foxes and the aimlessness of ants, then took to the low branches of trees and peered with clownish inquisitiveness at our intrusion. Egrets stood white sentinel over nothing, clean cut against the dark green at amazing distances. Gaunt adjutant storks stalked like professors immersed in thought about the elusive habits of frogs.

And then, with full daybreak, a queer creature like a very large wolf with abnormally long ears chased the scouting dogs out of the bush fringe and stood and screamed at us. The gun boys were where gun boys always are—in some other part of Africa. I dismounted and tried to stalk the beast with a luger

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pistol; but it retreated into the bush; and the dogs came with me and growled at all the places where it was not. Then, when I gave up the hunt, it came back to the bush fringe and screamed again. It must have been behind me all the time.

This was beginning to be good country. Later, Galla huts began to appear in the distance, well away from the mosquito belt. Round dome-roofed things of mud wattle and thatch; all of them inclosed in their encircling fence of thorn bush. Tall spearmen stood and looked at us from their corral gates with aloof suspicion; but proffered neither hospitality nor hostility.

Later again, after we had left the papyrus swamp behind us, was a great, far-spreading village of many hundred dome-shaped brown residences. A whole tribe in force. In spite of Jim's assurance that the Gallas were good fellows, we felt distinctly nervous. We were none too certain about their dispositions after the recent military expedition. Till we came closer and found the dome-shaped houses to be ant-hills, termite mounds of ten, twelve, and twenty feet in height. We were relieved. No Gallas, we reasoned, would elect to live in a district where the termite pest was so prolific.

Here was opportunity for us. We had been looking out, Jim and I, for some thick-boled tree from which we might peel the bark and make on the white stem a target to sight in our rifles. But never a usable tree had we come upon in all that burnt-out plain. Slim acacias offered no width, and the fig-trees by the river banks, while their stems were sometimes thirty feet

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round, were so shaded by their enormous branches that swept the ground as to be impossible.

Here a big ant-hill offered a splendid target where we could follow every shot, and there was a choice of many ranges, too, among convenient mounds to make a splendid elbow and muzzle rest. So we cut away a comfortable rest at about a hundred and fifty yards and fired a half string of shots apiece. I more than Jim, because mine was a Lyman forty-eight peep-sight fitted to a Savage rifle, three hundred caliber, model ninety-nine. This sight was designed expressly as a receiver sight for the Springfield sporting models; and my own amateur gunsmith craft in fitting it to the Savage called for quite some adjustment.

We fired perhaps fifteen shots in all over a space of ten minutes. While we were still firing we heard, between shots, a far-away shrill *oo-oooh-ooohing* that spread in all directions and ever farther into the distance. We grinned and told each other that those must be natives who were shrilling their frightened warnings to each other that war had suddenly descended upon them again. Rather a joke upon the poor, foolish natives, we thought, that they should have been scared into the tall timber by our little harmless rifle practice.

What were these stories about warlike Gallas, almost as fierce as the Masai? Still, who could blame them so shortly after a military force had been through their country?

With the speed of motion-picture dramatics we were disillusioned. We were still giggling at our jest,

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when bushes crackled before us and we found our road cut off by a party of clean-limbed men with splendid leg muscles, armed with a brace of broad-bladed spears apiece. Other men flitted between the thorn scrub farther away. Horses galloped through the bush. *Oo-oooh-oo-oooh* sounded all around us. And closer, not rapidly farther.

Gallas to right of us, Gallas to left of us, some mounted, some afoot. Every one naked for the war and armed with two or more spears apiece, come hotfoot to see what this war was about.

It was then that we made swift mental offerings to our various gods that we had come away without official permits and the attendant paltry guard of half a dozen zabantias, or Abyssinian soldiers, with their uniforms. For that would have looked in all truth like the foolhardy starting of a new war. And these Gallas didn't look to be at all afraid.

They ringed us round, and the farther bush crackled with the coming of more of them. Then Jim spoke quickly to one of his boys, a Galla lad from farther west, who translated.

He said that we were not soldiers, as could be seen; that we were passing peaceably on a hunting trip; and that, as we went by, the evil spirit who inhabited that ant-hill had cursed us from within; so, of course, we had stopped and shot it.

Quite so. That was a perfectly understandable explanation to those tall tribesmen; and they came and examined the ant-hill and stuffed their arms into the almost explosive holes made by the 180-grain bullets

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and said, *Aie*, that evil spirit must quite surely be dead. That was quite the proper way to deal with bad spirits. And then they, in turn, grinned to each other and said how fortunate it was that we were not soldiers—for us, we felt that they meant.

But, the introduction now completed, they became quite friendly and stood round to gossip and to exchange the news of the day. Jungle gossip, as it is all the world over. Who were we and where were we going and what were our names and were all white women as adventurous as that one, and if so, why had none ever visited their country before? And so on for an interminable hour. Then they began, by twos and threes, to drift away, back into their thorn scrub; and we heard their shrill calls again to their hidden villages. Another kind of *oo-ooo-oooh*, higher and longer drawn out than their war-call to the gathering, which we had fondly told ourselves was their call of alarm. This was their call of reassurance to their women-folks. Afterwards we came to know that these Gallas had no call of alarm.

A full day's trek brought us to the end of this lake; by which I judge its length to be twenty-five miles, which is good going for pack mule caravan.

At the farther end of that lake is a sudden steep outcrop of black granite heaved up out of the desiccated plain, I suppose, by the same cataclysm that made the great rift; much like the buttes of our western plains. Perched on the top of this eerie is a square, squat, impregnable roost of a robber baron. His name

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is not *Allan Quartermain*. But it surely would be if it were not that his hair is a flaming red and he is a German.

Small is this man and scrubby as to lurid hair and beard. He has the gentlest voice and the keenest baby-blue eyes in all Africa. He reads Kant and Blavatsky; and he does nothing, embarks upon no venture, without first consulting a Galla witch doctor on the omens.

He was waiting for us. A witch woman had cast the stones for him and told him that white men were coming and—unguessable event—a white woman. So he had a great bowl of curdled milk ready as a thirst-quencher for the guests.

I thought that Hunter Jim had knowledge of Africa. But this old pioneer knew Africa by trail and water-hole. Forty years ago he came to the land and after trekking it from the north to the south and from east to west, and having fought through two or three tribal wars during the first twenty of them, he discovered Abyssinia; that highland plain, that climate, that fertile ground—near water; and this, he decided, was the promised land and there he settled.

Bordering on this lake he now has an estate of some three miles square. During twenty years of unremitting labor he has built for himself—or rather has transplanted and grown for himself—six miles of corral of candelabra cactus. Thick, impermeable; a defense against hyenas—or elephants—where he keeps his three hundred head of cattle and a herd of ostriches.

An astonishing sight is this green mathematical square, subdivided into smaller squares, seen from

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the top of the robber roost. The old pioneer has a windmill to draw him water from the lake. He has coffee, or cotton, or whatever he chooses to plant; and he plans to build him a motor-truck road to the railroad more than a hundred miles distant, and so to furnish butter to a starved metropolis where a thousand Europeans yammer for fresh butter. He talks, too, of an ice-house, and fish from the lake for those hungry white folks to whom a half-smoked and sun-dried native fish is a treat.

With an old Schützen rifle he has hunted the surrounding country just about clean. His talk is of koodoo on the near-by hills and various of African "bok" and "beeste" on the plain.

"Plenty of good shooting round here," he says, and he pokes with his red beard up at a wall, a veritable *chevaux de frise* of horns. The reminiscence of a hunter comes upon him.

"I got that big koodoo right across the river here—no, not that one. That's nyala; koodoo family, but you've got to go to Gugu Mountain for them. That big fellow to the left is koodoo. Got him at four hundred yards, and running like a devil too. I'll show you the place later. Plenty of koodoo here—at least, there used to be, though I don't remember seeing any for some time lately. Let me see—" he ruminates—"not since sixteen or seventeen, when that war was going on in Europe and von Lettow was keeping the rest of them busy down in Kenya. Yes, I shot the last koodoo in nineteen seventeen, I think; and the last hartebeeste—that's the one over the door—a couple

of years later. Got to go a long way to get them now. *Aie*, yes, the hunting used to be better in the old days."

Thereat Hunter Jim interjects a remark about the hunting that he used to know in such and such an inaccessible spot of the interior, and then the two old-timers groan in unison about the good old days that used to be; and the plain tenderfoot traveler folk sit in silence and absorb knowledge; for from these old-timers' lips flows unconscious wisdom of the ways of wild beasts and wilder men; tales of red romance and desperate daring and awesome adventure that they relate as but incidents of their fantastic lives. Beings apart, of a different planet almost, they seem to be as they crouch together over the crude native lamp of clay and throw their huge shadows among the diabolic horns on the wall. One wonders if these things really happen in this world in this century. Yet one cannot doubt the undisguised candor of men who each know that the other knows.

From such hairbreadth happenings it is a far drop to a report of a common ordinary hippopotamus. Yet with hippo must common ordinary travelers be content who spend no lifetime but make only a meager expedition of a few months into Africa.

Among the native satellites of this estate was an interesting piece of news about our ferocious man-eating hippo. A river ran from this first lake into the one for which we had been aiming. A steep-sided stream of ten miles long, Bulbullu, it was called by the Gallas because it bubbled along—which meant also

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that it must therefore be shallow. Well, our hippo had come up this waterway but a few days ago to visit a lady acquaintance of the upper lake who had been moaning mournfully for company for the past two weeks, and he had only yesterday night started back, warned without doubt by the *anu*, the protective water spook that looked after hippo interests. Yet if we were to make an offering to the *anu* and were to hurry we might possibly be lucky enough to catch the beast in the shallows of the river before he should get to the deeper fastness of his own lake.

Was it due to the cunning of the *anu* or was it sheer native dumbness that delayed this information till it was too late in the day to pull up stakes and start on a long stalk along the river bank? Not till an hour before sundown did the story come to us; which meant that nagadis, even though we had driven them with whips, would not have been loaded and ready to start till two hours after dark. So we were forced to lose that chance and stay overnight in camp.

And that night all the hyenas that had been wishing for the past few years that they could get into that cactus corral came and howled round our camp. Which meant again that it was with a train of raggedy and nervous mules and irritable nagadis that we made a late start the next morning.

We drew blank on the river—the *anu* had worked well—and it was afternoon again when we camped on the outskirts of a Galla village at the point where the Bulbullu ran into the lake—or rather a mile and a half distance from the water's edge. For this was our

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hippo's home lake, the lake we had come so far to visit; and a mile at least—so the natives said—was the beast's feeding range; and so they had learned to live well beyond that limit.

Though that information didn't come until late again. For it took the rest of the afternoon to establish friendly relations with the aloof natives. It was necessary to send a boy with offers of backsheesh and to buy a smoke-blackened potful of the dirtiest sour milk in the world from the ugliest old woman in the village—and to consume all of it, to prove our goodwill—before we could get down to small talk with the men folks and, what was important to us, with the local hunter.

"Oh, yes," he told us: the big *gumaré* had come home yesterday afternoon splashing through the shallow river like a herd of cattle, and was now sleeping not far from the river mouth. At dusk he would come out to feed; and he, the hunter, would show us exactly where, if we would first give him a backsheesh of five cartridges.

Hunter Jim knew all about cartridge currency and had brought along a big belt full. These are cartridges made to fit the old "Gras" rifles, of which there are so many in the country. Four hundred and fifty caliber they are, and they pass as small change at the rate of five or six to the Abyssinian dollar in far-away places where money will not be accepted under any circumstances. It does not matter that there may not be any sort of rifle in a community spread over a day's march in any direction; these Gras cartridges are good for

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a goat or three or four fowls or fifty eggs—including some good ones—or a great five-gallon pot of native beer apiece.

There is a good story about cartridges. An astute Greek gentleman in Addis Abeba does a land-office business in manufacturing this currency for caravan-eers. He buys up empty shells and reprimers them and fills them with a fairly innocuous mixture of mud and saltpeter and something that goes off with plenty of noise—quite often; and he corks them with a fat lead bullet; and there you are.

The business is every bit as illegitimate as liquor in the United States. So everybody knows where to get them. And nobody ever complains about the quality of the product any more than a gentleman would complain about his bootlegger. Moreover, these cartridges are not expected to be wasted in a gun, but to be carried about, maybe for years, as money. Nor can cartridges, as the clever manufacturer explains, be expected to improve with age. How can anybody complain about the ballistic qualities of a cartridge that one has carried about for a year or two one's self and has obtained as small change from some other person who has had it who knows how long?

So there is never any come-back on these currency shells. And anyway, they are quite as good as the eggs that one buys with them, and they explode just about as often.

The Lake Abiata hunter, then, for five cartridges agreed to take us out along the lake shore where this big hippo would feed. And as soon as it began

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to get dark, take us out he did. And he enjoined the greatest caution upon us: not to stumble, not to let metal clink upon metal, above all not to whisper. For the hearing of hippos was very acute, and that of this beast particularly so, and his temper in proportion. One sound of us, one sniff down-wind, and he would charge with great mouth agape as wide as a crocodile.

With all this precaution it was quite dark by the time we began to reach the lake shore. The moon would not be up for an hour yet, and the dark was the clammy mist of wide water spaces. We stumbled along with a clatter that was appalling in the stillness.

It is only in stories of fiction, written by men who have never been there, for boys who will never have the chance to go, that the hero glides through the bush with the lithe silence of a panther. In actual practice it is a shameful thing what a clumsy racket two not inexperienced white men and a not ungraceful white woman make when they try their best to be careful. On this night-stalk, boots squeaked like scurrying rats, cord riding-breeches rasped leg against leg, rifle slings rattled as though they were chains. With each new noise we held our breaths and tingled, expecting any moment to hear a roar and to feel, rather than to see, a huge bulk hurtling toward us.

Yet we survived. Till presently, sure enough, directly in the path where the cunning old hunter was leading us, three dim shapes loomed ahead. By bending low we could discern them against the black gray of the sky-line. One of them must be our bull. We halted to regain our breaths, and, lip to ear, arranged how

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we would shoot. We stalked by inches now. Twenty feet close we must get at the very least; for rifle sights were not to be thought about; we would have to shoot by the feel of the general direction. We would, by elbow nudging, agree which beast was the biggest, and we would all three then shoot at it together in the hope of knocking it over by sheer weight of metal.

And if we all missed together and it charged roaring down upon us, my lady would drop everything and run anywhere she could, anyhow she could. The crafty old native hunter would do so anyway, without any special instructions. And Hunter Jim and I, relying upon our nimbleness of foot to dodge at the last moment, would keep on pumping hot lead out of our magazines in the forlorn hope of turning the beast. Breaths were stilled and hearts thumped as we crept forward.

Forty feet. Thirty feet. Twenty. The beasts remained amazingly unsuspicious. Almost tame. Yet five more feet. We couldn't miss now.

Then one of them lifted his head and whinnied. The other two lifted theirs, tossed their manes; and the three of them trotted off with a clatter of hoofs on the hard ground. Immediately whole flocks of a pestiferous plover kind of bird that is the bane of the African hunter rose and screamed all round us till the night was full of the jeering of the nether dark.

The effect upon the keen and crafty old native hunter was something beyond a white man's comprehension. By no means abashed was he, but stated with the calmness of conviction that the birds were a sign;

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he could tell, from the way they screamed, that the hippos were out, feeding on the reed flats which we knew existed half a mile to our left, where the Bul-bullu ran into the lake.

We were not nearly so convinced. But since we had come so far we might as well take the chance and hope for luck, for it was a likely enough spot. So thither we stumbled over low cactus and thorn patch, and schooled ourselves to the patience of stalking the last hundred yards. And we reached the river unscathed.

There we crouched in painful alertness with straining eyes and ears while some diabolic night-bird piped a piercing note of fretful inquietude. Till the souls of dead devils reincarnated in mosquito form descended upon us in solid droves from the lake shore and chased us thence in a frenzy of impotence. We cursed them and the place and the armor-plated native hunter, and ran from there as fast as the night and the dead stumps and the thorn patches would allow.

And then we heard our hippo, deep and low out of the after-dark, laughing at us.

"Ho-ho-ho-ee-eech ho-ho!"

Sathanas himself deriding us out of the pit.

"Awaie," opined the hunter wisely. "It is the *anu* of this water who speaks with *gumaré's* voice."

The *anu* of the water seemed in all truth to be a powerful spirit and well disposed to hippos. For during all our stay at that lake never a hippo showed his nose above water. Not even the far, floating speck of nostril and ears that offer the most difficult shot in the world

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over heat-shimmery water. Though we scoured the lake surface with an eight-power Zeiss glass, we saw nothing. Not even once.

We fretted and cursed the unreliability of native rumor. We called ourselves fools for having come so far on an unsubstantiated story. Crafty and suspicious though an old bull hippo might be, he would have to come up to breathe some time, somewhere. And surely there must be more than one hippo in the world. If water were favorable for the support of one, surely there must be others. Why could we see nothing?

Then came the excited yarn that our savage hippo had eaten up a horse. This was intriguing. Even a carnivorous outbreak might be expected of a hippopotamus that lived under the special protection of a strong water spirit. But that was only the first telling of it. The story showed an immediate tendency to grow according to all the rules of African tradition, adding several feet to the size of the animal and a couple of native boys to the catastrophe. But with time and more than human patience in the sifting out of much shouting and chatter, a fairly coherent story was pieced together. It seemed that farther still to the south another river flowed into this Abiata from yet another lake known as the Hora-uitu, the "Brackish Water"; that in the Hora-uitu, where white men never went at all, hippo lived in vast herds; and that our private hippo, the one we had come to shoot, had fled up this other river to join the herds there.

How did the native romancers know? Because a pair of frightened boys who had been watering their horses

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in the river and swimming with them had run screaming home to their village, and had reported that as the horses stood belly-deep in the water a huge hippo had come surging up the river and had frightfully mauled an unfortunate horse that stood in its way, and the horse was surely going to die. This version remained fairly constant through cross-questioning, so that it seemed that something more or less like the story had really happened.

We, having set forth from afar to slay, were beginning to be gripped by the mighty-hunter complex. Only blood can appease that complex. Blood with its attendant sequence of fiction about the length of the chase and of the size and the cunning and the ferocity of the ultimate victim.

Let me lay stress upon that word "beginning." Let me also hurriedly assure all would-be expeditionists that the pursuit of a hippopotamus, vast beast though it is, is not "big-game hunting." An angry bull hippo can, under certain circumstances, be dangerous, as has been amply proved by that father of British hunters, Sir Samuel Baker. But hippo is far removed from the "big four"—elephant, rhino, buffalo, and lion—which are the really dangerous beasts of Africa.

Let me, however, yet further point out that this expedition at no time set out to establish a record for the slaughter of big game. It was just a trip of ordinary American travelers to go-look-see and to do some of the more out-of-the-way things.

As such, a bull hippopotamus that ate men and horses was beginning to grip our fancy and to arouse

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our atavistic instincts to slay. For did not the story persist that it was a menace to our hospitable friends, the ferocious Gallas? Was it not the duty of the white explorer, established by every literary precedent, to act as instant *deus ex machina* for the protection of the harassed native? The mighty-hunter complex did not need much persuasion that this fabled monster was all one and the same beast that we were tracking down with such relentless determination.

CHAPTER VIII

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BUT hippo was a hunt to be postponed. Hunting other than for sport or blood vengeance was more urgent. Meat. And in large quantities. The end of the Abyssinian Easter was upon us; and it is a fact difficult for credence that nagadis, close though they are to the beasts that perish, maintain a rigorous fast during the whole of what corresponds to our Lent. They will eat only bread, *injera*, a sort of unleavened sour dough, and *shimbura*, horse gram, during that whole month, and will travel on it.

But when the month of fast is over—O gods of gastronomy! It is once again a fact difficult of credence that one nagadi or boy will squat back on his haunches and consume half a sheep in that twenty-four hours of holiday and feasting. It is also immemorial custom that on that day the master, Abyssinian or foreigner, must declare a holiday and provide meat to make it a worthy one, and, if humanly possible, butter.

The latter was easy. The Gallas live almost entirely upon curdled milk and butter with that *injera* stuff. This, with eggs, would sound like quite luxurious larder possibilities. But let it be considered how finicky we

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are in America about our dairy products. Gallas have their own prejudices and are just as "sot" about them.

To begin with, a cow must be milked into a gourd purified by smoke. Wood smoke will do—if one happens to be burning wood. But since wood, to be burnt, must first be chopped up, and since cattle chips are plentiful and require no labor, wood fires are not frequent. And we all know, even in the most effctely sanitary modern apartment, what a fiendish affinity milk has for absorbing each separate delicate flavor out of a super-clean porcelain ice-box.

Galla milk, therefore, has a flavor quite unlike grade A pasteurized.

It might be supposed that a really energetic caravaner—one who has not yet passed the limit of human exasperation and sunk into the hopeless *laissez faire* of African trekking—might strike upon the happy thought of sitting around until some Galla would decide to milk his cow and might then produce a nice aluminum pot and some backsheesh and thus acquire milk.

There have been such caravaneers. Foolish, impatient Americans who have thought to change primitive custom by common sense and the power of gold. They have lost their illusions and have become embittered cynics.

Under no circumstances will a Galla herdsman milk his cow into a *frangi* pot. Nor into any pot other than a gourd that has been properly purified. Otherwise his cow will die. It will cease to give milk and will shrivel up and die.

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He knows it, because his wise men have told him that this is so. And when the impatient American has given up hoping to drink milk and has, in the course of time, allowed his exasperation to simmer down, he recognizes that the wise men are very wise indeed. For in just such manner did Moses lay down his hygienic law to his people.

This acrid smoke cure, then, quite probably has the effect of slaying the lesser bacteria which would otherwise infest a milk gourd that is never washed because water is far and scarce, but is sometimes—when insects and things have fallen into it and can't be shaken out—wiped out clean with a good greasy rag that is kept for this and various other purposes. But all this hygiene doesn't prevent butter made of this purified milk from turning rancid when stored in a large earthen pot with a leaf over the top for a hermetic seal.

And eggs. Not very much can be said in direct recommendation of Galla eggs. They are ovoid spheres and have brownish-white shells. But after that they are not so very much like "guaranteed fresh" or even like admitted "cold storage." One is impelled to demand of the kindly old crones who bring them the old colloquialism of, "How do they get that way?" But the dear old things don't understand. Dully they reiterate. "These are eggs; fifteen for one cartridge." One gains the impression that they rate eggs according to their explosive coefficient and strike an even balance against a Greek cartridge.

Gallas don't eat eggs themselves. Their viewpoint is not without some reason. They consider them to be

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embryos and sniff scornfully that only savage people eat unborn meat. The explanation of the standard quality of what the old dames peddle seems to be, then, that those that don't hatch out they save up for passing caravans—and caravans don't come by so often.

But these warrior folk have no inhibitions against smoke-cured rancid butter. They like it so well that they rub their bodies all over with it as well as eat it in lumps. There appeared a stalwart youth in our camp with the stuff plastered over his hair in thick gobs and beginning to melt and trickle down his shoulders and limbs. The explanation of this pleasing formality was simple.

"Oh, he wants to get married; so he has just killed his man back in the hills there and he is going round to show off and to collect his wedding presents."

There has been a long standing war between these Gallas and their neighbors in the far hills, the Gouragis. So whenever a venturesome youth wants to show his prowess and demonstrate his manly readiness for matrimony, he goes over and gets him a Gouragi. The system imposes something of a handicap upon the Gouragis, who are a hard-working and most practical folk and have no possible use for dead Gallas. But they do, in their meager hills, appreciate cattle. The Gallas, in their plains, are rich in cattle. So the feud rate for a slain Gouragi seems to be about six cows; or more, depending upon the social standing of the victim and the retaliative energy of his family.

It would seem that this system might be recommended to the earnest consideration of our stanch ex-

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ponents of genetics. How many a weakling, a menace to posterity, might be eliminated in his attempt to earn his right to reproduce his valueless species!

We gave our strutting Galla youth two cartridges toward his home furnishing, and right pleased he was. I had it translated loudly to the tall warriors who stood on one leg all round us leaning on their shiny spears that I would swiftly pay fifty cartridges to any brave youth who would kill me one of our nagadis and would make me a shield out of his skin. But they thought I was only joking.

Upon an Easter holiday, however, past offenses must be forgiven. Nagadis, as well as camp boys, must be fed. Both like butter, whether they can purloin it from master's table or scoop it out of a Galla pot. Five more Greek cartridges procured a pot containing about two gallons of this sour mess. But how to supply meat was the question.

The local hunter assured us that hartebeeste and Grant's gazelle roamed in vast herds, "thick as cattle," and "just over there; just beyond that belt of thorn bush." So we saddled up, Jim and I, for a long day's ride—for we both knew native hunters—and we took two extra pack mules for all the meat and rode just beyond that belt—and continued riding for four hours before we saw the first sign of any beast other than cattle or goats.

It is my experience that the superhuman native hunter and tracker who picks up unerring signs that a white man cannot even see is also one of the big blahs

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of mighty hunter literature. I would be inclined to bet that a good Maine guide would be as good as any native tracker as soon as he should accustom his eyes to the local conditions. And as for information about animals: everybody who has ever been in the bush knows that the more or less savage dwellers therein—be they African or Asian or American—know infinitely less about the beasts that surround them than does the ordinarily observant sportsman. Their knowledge about the ways of animals is superstition and legend rather than fact, and their information about the whereabouts of game is always unreliable.

Only here and there a native hunter can be met with who knows the beasts he hunts. And a good one knows his beasts personally by name and individual marking. Though at that, I have had an Indian shikari tell me with the utmost conviction of the dealings of sundry tigers with the local pot-bellied godlings and jungle imps.

So we were not unprepared to ride a hard four hours before we suddenly flushed a pair of Grant's gazelles, a female and a young one, not fifty yards from us in fairly thick bush. But, as gazelles usually do, they saw us first; and they were up and off in a flash, going with the speed of those beasts that have only speed to rely upon for preservation of their lives from leopards and hunting dogs, and with that extraordinary stiff-legged bounding gait that distinguishes Grant's.

Let some other mighty hunter who has the complex badly tell how he can snap up his rifle and shoot a Grant's gazelle appearing and disappearing in red-

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brown streaks through patches of bush. As for me, I didn't even try. But Jim said wisely:

"Look, they're circling. They'll lead us to the herd."

So we followed on foot. And sure enough they did—in time. There was a herd of about twenty feeding quietly and traveling nicely up wind. Grant's are notoriously shy and difficult to shoot. But we made a fair stalk for which I take unblushing credit. Up to a hundred and fifty yards with a clear view. We picked our animals and fired. I heard Jim's voice say: "Mine fell."

And I was so certain that I had had a clear and steady bead that I didn't even attempt another rear-end shot. I watched to see my buck fall too. And watched; and watched; and I hadn't even the satisfaction of seeing it lag behind the rest. And I was the man who had been talking to Jim about putting a dollar on the shot.

But Jim was magnanimous. All that he said was:

"One isn't nearly enough for all that gang. We'll probably get another chance. This is good country and there must be more."

So I gave up looking for blood stains on the ground, and we spread out a bit and tramped for another hour through the bush. A couple of hartebeeste saw us in good time; and, in a patch of moisture, something with long ears that might have been a reed buck. And then we saw a Grant's gazelle again. I was closer, and I didn't have the decency to let Jim come up with me; for he was one buck ahead. I started on my stalk.

Two hundred yards this time before they began to

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be uneasy and move off. So I found a quick rest over a low limb, picked my beast, and pressed slowly and evenly on the trigger.

My victim went away from there as fast as any of them. But another buck, a good six feet away from it, jumped high in the air as though something had at least startled it.

Jim, away behind me, said no word, but started running in a diagonal direction toward where the herd would probably circle; and I was still looking for blood tracks when I heard his distant shot.

I hoped with all my heart that he had missed. But presently I heard his "*Oo-oo-eeh*," and then I hoped it would be a measly female.

But it wasn't. It was a fine buck with a pair of horns a good match for the first. Jim was still magnanimous. He said:

"It's that durn patent peep sight of yours. I wouldn't have one of those damn things on my gun for a present. Give me a good old square sight every time."

It was in vain that I explained to him the lore of the modern peep sight. That through a peep one did not have to look for one's game over a black bar of iron and then center it, and then, at best, have half of it concealed by the bar: that one saw the whole of one's target through a thin circle whose proximity to the eye made a semi-transparent blur of the circumference; that the orthoptic properties of the peep eliminated 50 per cent. of the glare; that the human eye naturally and without effort sought the center of the blurred circle and that all one then had to do was to bring the front

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sight to bear on the desired point; as easy as aiming a shot-gun.

But Jim would have none of it. An open sight for him, and results were the best arguments. We wrangled over it all the way back to camp. But what arguments of theory could I produce against the tangible evidence of two fat bucks?

It was not till evening, when I was cleaning my rifle and debating upon whether to throw it into the lake or to make a more useful implement out of it—a kitchen poker—that I discovered one more of the bright little ways of the African boy.

This Lyman 48 sight has, in addition to the elevation adjustment, a wind-gage adjustment reading to minutes of angle. One full revolution of the wind-gage screw adjusts to one "point" as on the standard military rifle; and one quarter revolution, marked by a click against a spring tension, to one minute of the angle; the system adopted by all modern expert riflemen—and by some mighty hunters. One minute of angle subtends one inch at a hundred yards; two inches at two hundred yards, and so on. There are ten points on the scale to either side of center; that is to say, forty minutes, or, reduced down to point of impact at two hundred yards, eighty inches.

Well, one of the gun boys at some time between the careful sighting in of the rifle and this first actual shooting with it, had noticed this nice little gadget on it—this pleasing screw that he could twiddle as he walked along. Accordingly, with monkey perseverance he had twiddled until it went no farther; and then his

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mind had wandered off to a contemplation of nuts or juicy grubs or something, and so he had left it.

So that when I fired over a steady rest at my buck at two hundred yards range, my bullet went more than six feet to the left of the heart of that buck.

I could never find out which bright boy had done it; so I have not his tanned skin as a trophy. But that instituted my rule number one of trekking; even as the law of the Medes and Persians.

Always carry your rifle yourself. No matter how hot it may be or how heavy the rifle grows with each extra hour. Always carry it yourself. A gun boy, anyway, as has been witnessed by a thousand African hunters, is always somewhere else when you need him to the very urgency of life.

And since then I have always carried my rifle over my shoulder with a sling—in spite of the fact that slings always rattle when game is wariest. And I have grown a callus on my left shoulder thereby. But I have my gun when I want it.

All the same, I still wonder why I couldn't have been lucky enough to hit that other buck that jumped so high at two hundred yards.

However, there was meat for the Easter gorge. And it is sober truth that our one dozen crew ate those two buck up so thoroughly that there was not enough left to be worth while taking away the next day when we took up the trail of our vanishing hippopotamus. They ate every bit of it raw, too.

This raw-meat hunger is a peculiar appetite that is prevalent not only among camp boys but all through

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Abyssinia. The explanation is that Abyssinia has been a country so torn by war for so many generations that nearly every able-bodied man is a soldier. The exigencies of long forced marches being opposed to the sitting down and cooking of meals, the soldiers just became accustomed to eating their meat raw, on the run; and some very extraordinary marches are said to have been made under these none too favorable conditions.

So the military habit has become a national custom. The prince and the enlightened Abyssinians are trying to discourage it, for the reason that a raw-meat diet is a sure cause of tape-worm, which is a—one can hardly call it a disease, since nobody seems to mind it—let us say, rather, an affliction prevalent throughout the country.

It is an extraordinary custom, on account of this prevalence, for everybody to take, every couple of months, a draft of an excoriating medicine called *kossoh* and then to go into a prostrated retirement for three days.

It is disconcerting, when one calls upon a man, say on a matter of urgent business, to be told blandly that the gentleman is not on view, having but yesterday taken his *kossoh*.

Nagadis on caravan produce the urge of *kossoh* as a heaven-ordained means of calling a three-day halt whenever they feel that a rest and a loaf would be a good thing. They will arrange the thing in concert and will leeringly some morning emerge from their tent minus one of their number; and, upon angry remon-

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strance, will triumphantly point to that one lying within their tent in the throes of *kossoh*.

One of the lesser ropes of caravaning in Abyssinia is the rule never to let the boys get any *kossoh*; and, since that is as difficult as to keep a drunkard away from drink, a yet better rope is sternly to go ahead and break camp and to leave the groaning nagadi to the tender mercies of the good Gallas, among whom are always foolishly venturesome youths who want to earn their right to get married!

Judicious use of this rope gives sturdy legs to any sick nagadi.

And, after the Easter gorge, it was exactly this rope that we drew upon in order to break camp and get away. Our sick nagadi was very properly impressed by the covetous looks of the stalwart young men who had witnessed our generosity to the butter-smeared aspirant for matrimony. He groaned feebly, and his fellow-conspirators with as much noise as a zoo. But he got up and made a long trek with the rest of them. By which we knew—what we had been morally certain of all the time—that nobody in the camp had any *kossoh* at all and the whole thing had been just a nagadi subterfuge for a three-day continued loaf.

To the "Brackish Water," the Hora-uitu, the trek proceeded. The long and stern chase, rather, we mighty hunters told ourselves, after the ferocious beast that was fleeing before our determination.

The trail presently struck the river and followed it; and right there, as the native guide pointed out, were

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horses bathing belly-deep in the stream to prove his story. Probably the same group in the same place, we suggested to the native; and he assured us with naïve faith, yes.

It was a good trail. Wide spaces of good grazing land with the Abyssinian minimum of thorn bush—which means scrub trees not closer than thirty feet together; and another kind of tree at last, a thing of green leaves and a green fruit like an olive in shape and like hydrochloric acid in taste. But the Gallas eat them. So do monkeys and birds.

What swarms of birds! I had heard that Abyssinia was an ornithologist's paradise; but I had never understood that every bird was a new variety as well as a little darting rainbow of its own. Steeped in wonder and admiration of the Abyssinian birds, I have regretted that I am not an ornithologist. All the coloring that one has been accustomed to associating with parrots and humming-birds one sees in these birds. I wept that I was as stupid as all the rest of us and could place only hawks and eagles and things; and orioles—at all events, birds that wove their nests and hung them upside down. There must have been a dozen different kinds of weavers, each with its different shape of nest, some as straggly and untidy as sparrows and some as neat as kindergartens.

And it was irresistibly noticeable that the neat ones belonged to correspondingly decorous builders; beautiful, virtuous creatures that hung upside down in their doorways and chirruped to their innocuous mates who sat above. While the untidy nests belonged to others as

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painted and fussy and loud and chattering as a chorus of the Folies-Bergères.

But this pretty dicky-bird dissertation is out of place. We are mighty hunters in a savage land, thirsting to shed blood. The Hora-uitu turned out to be a magnificent piece of water, with shelving shores free, for four or five miles at a stretch, of that terrible papyrus swamp that is such a hopeless bar against all approach.

And on the shelving shore, close to the outflow of the river which was our hippo's highway, were great, round, four-toed tracks; many of them; some small enough to be mistaken for overtrodden cattle spoor, some as big as dessert plates; and one, fresh last night, a monster trail that would have done credit to a sizable elephant.

Here were hippos at last. It seemed as though this far lake was their sanctuary. Here surely would be our chance to end this thing. With experienced hunters' craft, we made camp a good mile from that place so that no unseemly noises might disturb the wary beasts. We fired no shots at marauding vultures or at the jackals that began to slink around with sundown. And then with the dusk we took our rifles and two camp chairs and crept down to the beach. It would be, possibly, a long wait; but some time during that night the beasts would come out to feed. And then, if we waited and did not lose our heads, and remained very still, that monster bull would surely come too.

A still breeze sprang up with the dark, quartering across the lake toward us. That was good. We permitted ourselves a whispered congratulation—keen

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as was their sense of smell, they wouldn't get our scent.

But the mosquitos would—and did.

Gods of the chase, what droves of mosquitos! We sat on a sandy lake shore; but from the wet grass fringe behind us they rose in their waves; merciless emissaries of those jealous gods of sport to test our fortitude. And we set our teeth and stuck it out. Took it sitting still. We dared not squirm or twist or slap; for we heard them moving out there in the dark; our hippos moving cautiously inshore.

One grunted somewhere with the ventriloquistic effect of sound close to the water's surface. Another one answered. Quiet splashes indicated that bulky bodies were heaving themselves up into the shallows.

And then one laughed. The deep bass, satanic "*ho-ho-ho-ee-eeh-ho-ho*" that we heard once before. We wondered why. Then a long silence. Then splashing away to our right. The splashing grew in volume. We let ourselves out and swore.

For to the right, where the splashing was, was the side from which the wind blew offshore toward the water, and was, moreover, on the other side of the river! And there the splashing stayed.

I have never understood this maneuver of hippos; nor have I ever seen it mentioned by any writer on African animals. We could see nothing across there; for the sky was overcast, and the moon was late and a thin one. But we could hear plainly enough that many beasts were in shallow water, about knee depth, I should say, and that they apparently just stood and shuffled about. They were not walking in the shallows;

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for the noise remained in one place. Nor were they feeding there in a group; for later investigation showed that to be a clean sand bottom bare of reeds or lily roots or anything eatable. There was plenty of fodder farther inshore; grass and equicetum reed, but that was all well out of water. This splashing in the one place continued for about two hours and then gradually receded along the shore—away from us.

Then we went back to camp and believed everything we had heard about protective *anu* spooks.

We soothed our mosquito lacerations—they were more than bites—and told each other grimly that there would be another night to-morrow.

We had a boat, a novel invention called an *airaft*, which in fact it was; a vast automobile tire built oblong and with a bottom sewn in. One blew it up with a pump and, presto! there was a shallow-draft, bone-dry boat, easy to row or paddle, and capable of carrying two men and a pile of baggage. The whole thing, deflated in its canvas bag, measured about fourteen inches by ten by six, and weighed about eleven pounds. Quite the most efficient thing of its kind I have ever seen.

We grinned as we inflated this boat the next evening and quietly paddled across the river. If those *anu*-protected hippos preferred that shore for their dance, we would be waiting for them. We were prepared to find that the potent guardian spirit would see to it that the night would be dark again; and we took along modern white man's inventions that these spirits would know nothing about.

Jim had one of those "justrite" hunter lamps, a car-

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bide burner that was attached to the peak of a cap, something like a miner's light, that was ignited by a spark from a flint and little wheel like a cigar-lighter. No matches to fumble with there. Silent and sudden would be the shaft of bright white light. I, in the event of separation from Jim, lashed a flash-light to the forearm of my rifle, where I would press my thumb on the button with rifle held to shoulder and could see my front sight to perfection. We tested both our cunning devices and grinned at each other again. We were ready.

This night there was no wind. Good again. Anything rather than an offshore wind. Though that made no difference to the mosquitos. Once again we paid the price that the gods of chase demanded, and we wondered, as we thought of malaria, that the white man's craft had not yet devised some bug deterrent of less pungent and all-pervading odor than oil of pennyroyal or citronella.

Two Gallas came out of the dusk to squat with us and watch the mighty hunting. Their odor pervaded the landscape more pungently than citronella. The more so because of the quite anomalous reason that the clothing of one of them was new.

Which phenomenon has an explanation. The Gallas wear usually a mantle of dressed cowhide. But if one becomes rich he immediately buys himself a length of strong American cotton sheeting. Since, however, cotton sheeting is by no means waterproof, and since rain is plentiful in his country, he boils his new cotton sheet

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in a great potful of butter, which process renders it quite impervious to water—as impervious as the Galla himself is to the odor of butter aged in the cloth.

But Jim said the Galla-laden atmosphere didn't matter; because there were quite a lot of rich Gallas in that good cattle country, and the hippos in that region were well used to the tainted breeze.

But our companions didn't wait. From out on the lake somewhere boomed a long drawn *ho-ho-ho-ho-eeh-eeh-eeh*; and the two men got up and spat and said it was no use wasting any more time. That was the *anu* who had spotted us, and we would shoot nothing that night.

But Jim and I were not so convinced about *anus* as yet, and we decided to wait and reap the reward of our cunning and patience. So the Gallas laughed at us and went away. But our reward did come all the same—in the course of time. Let it be remembered that we had to take up our position behind bushes before dark and remain there without moving till the wily beasts should decide to come ashore. But they came at long last. Gruntings and vast breathings and low calls sounded from the dark lake. Questions to one another, and doubtful assurances that everything seemed to be all right. Then faint splashings. It was amazing how silent such great beasts could be.

This night they didn't dance in the shallows. We had hoped they would. With that noise going on we might have walked out and come, who knows how close. This time they came out to feed. Softly, one by one, they heaved out of the deeps and came ashore. By bending

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low we could just distinguish dim bulks against the faint sheen of the water, and then the blackness of the shore blotted them out again.

Presently we could hear squelchings in the soft mud behind us and scrunchings as of mowing machines. They were all round us, somewhere in the dark. I remembered all the stories I had read of the potential savagery of these beasts when trapped at a disadvantage on shore; all the authentic accounts of their attacks upon boats and occasionally upon keepers in zoos; all the tales that the Gallas had told of the ferocity of these particular brutes, and their obvious fear of them, born of experience; and I felt the tingling of the short hair up and down my spine. Jim helped to cheer the occasion by pressing his lips to my ear and breathing:

"My gosh, if one of them gets scared and starts for the water, he'll run right over us like a steam-roller."

We decided mutually, and without telling each other so, that it would be better to move out nearer to the water where the open sand strip would leave room to dodge. We crept out, one foot feeling the way for the next. A splash directly ahead arrested us. We froze. Straining our eyes, we made out a shadow looming in front; a thickening of the blackness against the less black water; an immensity doubled in size by the hanging night mist. And not thirty feet away. Our chance had come. Who but the big bull could be so enormous and so wary as to stay on the very edge of swift retreat?

I heard the faint cluck of Jim's water drip as he

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turned it on to the carbide. In a second I caught the odor of the gas. Scrape, went the spark-wheel. And scrape again. The black immensity snorted.

"What the hell!" I heard Jim's infuriated mutter.

Scrape once more.

Scrape, scrape, scr-r-rape! Damnation! Not a light!

And here I hesitate to record the blank truth; for it is not reasonably credible. We had tested that light in the afternoon. It had worked perfectly. We had cleaned it and put in a new load. And now, at this last critical moment, it refused to function. The thing, taken alone, is on the verge of excusable disbelief. Yet the sheer cussedness of inanimate objects is sufficiently known to sanction the telling.

But rank impossibility must be piled upon the incredible. I raised my rifle and pressed the button of my flash-light. Blackness! Not a glimmer. Not a glow. Darkness as dead as Tophet!

And there the bulk snorted in front of us.

"Hell!" I shouted. "Shoot blind, Jim!"

And we did. Both together, by the feel of our guns at our shoulders.

Who knows whether we hit anything? Probably we didn't. And even if we did, we carried no elephant guns that might hit heavy game almost anywhere and stop it. All I know is that the brute before us snorted once and then was gone in a surge of splashing like a locomotive through a washout.

In another second the soggy ground quaked all about us to the snorting rush of steam-rollers plunging down grade to the deeps. And we, so far from dodging,

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stood frozen and quaked with the ground. For, while hippopotamus is no "big game," it is just as disastrous to a mighty hunter to be trodden upon by one as by a charging bull elephant.

The hurtling splashing was a roar of surging waters. It receded; its waves came back and lapped up and down the beach. They died away. The black lake surface became silent.

And then from out of the black silence:

"Ho-ho-ho-ee-eeh-ho-ho-ho-ho!"

And farther out again:

"Eeeech-hoh-hoh-hoh!"

And that is the plain unbelievable truth exactly as it happened.

No, it was not just ill luck. It was not the cussedness of inanimate objects. It was not the dampness of the night moisture collecting upon batteries or upon metal hot from the day's sun.

It was the *anu* spirit of that Galla lake, the spirit that jeers at the presumptions of man.

I am convinced that *anu* spooks are live, malignant existences. If we had stayed there any longer, I'm sure I could have surprised one some day and photographed it.

But we didn't stay. The chance of shooting a hippo there after that fiasco was minus nil to the *nth* power. And the Gallas who knew all about these things came and assured us in their wisdom that all those hippos, and particularly our savage bull, would forthwith make a long night trek, twenty miles overland, back to the first lake, to Zwai of the papyrus swamps, where

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a European hunter of Addis Abeba had told us no hippo had ever been.

So we broke *laager* and trekked too, disgusted enough and pig-headed enough to hunt for a way over a mountain where the Gallas insisted there was no way—though we found one all the same.

CHAPTER IX

BIRDS AND THINGS

It was at that camp that the cook broiled the venison chops in the cold cream. Which story is an illustration of the ways of ladies and of camp boys.

My venturesome lady had brought along two huge jars of La Belle Something—or—other skin food in order to keep that school-girl complexion despite the rigors of the African sun. Most of the first jar—for thus does the feminine mind function—had already been used to combat the rigors of God's good wholesome ocean breeze during the voyage out. A little farther on—and this way does every normal mind function—familiarity with those overadvertised rigors of Africa began to breed a certain—let us say carelessness about the sacred cold cream ceremony. So that the first jar didn't empty till well away in the sun-scorched wilderness. One jar remained for all the rest of a year in Africa.

But it was a huge thing and ought, at the present rate of more rational consumption, to suffice. Some two pounds of cold cream would seem to a mere male to be sufficient for an awful lot of complexion. The empty jar, with its wide mouth and screw top, made a

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priceless container for almost anything that needed containing. And just about then one of the pack mules, in a fractious mood, kicked in the side of a kerosene oil case of supplies and so maltreated a can of crisco that it needed containing very badly indeed.

So, as Hunter Jim grunted, that cold cream jar was put to a dashed sight better use than it had been intended for.

Good. I was all in accord with Jim. Observe now the working of the African boy mind. Having used up a pound of salvaged crisco with the appalling waste for which African camp cooks have a special talent, the good boy—ape to the very core—rather than come and admit that the last batch was finished, postponed the evil day of reprimand by casting about for the wherewithal to continue his cooking. An identical screw-top jar containing an identical white sort of smear was a find indeed.

And so, *ss-s-s-pr-r-r-r-rt*, went that aid to beauty. Just about all of it, for—have you ever tried to fry with cold cream?—it really sputters away to just nothing at all.

My lady was stoical—as what else could she be? I recommend expeditions to brothers whose wives are nervous and apt to fly off the handle. Here was this one who had been fondly counting on La Belle Whoever-it-was supplying her with half a ton of cold cream upon her return to New York and putting her photograph into the Sunday papers with a facsimile letter of recommendation and everything—for a little pin money consideration, of course, since this is one of

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the lesser ropes of expedition financing. . . . And *s-s-p-r-r-t*, the whole scheme went to aid the beauty of the venison chops.

I—and sardonic Hunter Jim nobly helped me—made the very most of the exemplary opportunity to establish rule number two of trekking. No woman in charge of camp cooking should ever leave her cold cream—or anything else—loose where a camp boy or a monkey can get at it. My lady accepted the rule in chastened spirit. Hers was the fault and hers the loss. Now she would have to rely on the Bleachem anti-freckle lotion and the Eatmor lip-stick for the Sunday rotogravure publicity.

Yet that camp by the "Brackish Water" must be forgiven on account of its birds. I can't leave it without some small comment on the birds. Waders and shore-runners there were by battalions and fleets. Anywhere else they would have been interesting enough in their own little comings and goings. But here they were small stuff. Here amateur attention was arrested by black and white ibises, pink flamingoes, and great white pelicans. And particularly by a splendid fish eagle that perched all day with aimless patience on a low dead tree and screamed an anguished *wah-hiu-hiu* to a mate that never came.

But pelicans in their manifold maneuvers were the daily wonder. The immediate most noticeable thing about pelicans is that, while so fat and splay-footed and clumsy on land, the moment they take to the water they become graceful white yachts maneuvering for a

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good start, should a human come too close; and on the wing they are smooth-gliding planes of power and elegance. Close over the surface of the water they will often fly, a long line of them; each one in the exact wake of the other and each with the same machine regularity of wing beat. Three strong, unhurried sweeps and a long glide, five and a longer glide; each wing tip on the down stroke just skimming the water, leaving a thin V ripple behind. When that happens against the evening sun as the birds go home to roost one gasps with the delight of it, and weeps that cameras are, after all, such inadequate, monotonic machines.

Here let somebody rise and tell me about the newest *f.i.9* lenses and Ermanox cameras and isochrome extra-rapid plates with color filters. But let him try to catch white birds and pearl-gray water and black-green reed reflections against a pink sunset.

An apparent playtime of pelicans seems to be late afternoon, when they fly high and circle like questing vultures. And then they have a trick of disappearing completely for minutes at a time and suddenly reappearing again. Some queer effect doubtless of the low-lying light and shadow; but I've given up trying to explain it to myself. Strong glasses can pick them out, pale gray against a blue-gray sky; but to the naked eye they remain invisible till they wheel and appear suddenly like a squadron of white *aéroplanes* at five thousand feet, banking steeply to descend in wide spirals, then zooming up again on a strong wind. Perhaps some *scientifico* knows why.

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A flock of pelicans fishing is an example of coöperative labor that the natives could do worse than copy. Let these wise birds catch a school of small fry anywhere near the shore, and they will collect like a herring fleet and quickly organize a drive. In a half circle, beating the water with their wings, they will bedevil their prey and drive them systematically into the shallows.

And then admiration of the pelican is lost in amazement at his greed and capacity. It's all quite true about being durned if one can see how the hellican. With hoarse croakings and undignified scuffings the birds literally fall upon their meal and engulf it in huge shovelfuls. I hope I don't exaggerate when I say that a big pelican's bill pouch, working like a bucket dredge, will scoop up four or five pounds of small fish. Follows a craning of the bill, an agonized straining of the rubbery neck, with eyes squeezed tight over the effort; and the whole mass is gone and the bird is ready to climb over the backs of its neighbors who have got ahead of it during the brief moment of stress and to fall over their heads into the swirling mass for another scoopful. One should not watch pelicans feed.

Pink and white flamingoes supply the humor of the waterfront. Their long stiff legs and their necks stretched, with head immersed to snuffle for freshwater clams or algæ or whatever it is that they grub out of the mud shallows, they look like drunken tripods gone to sleep. I don't know whether anybody has ever had the patience to watch and find out for how long a flamingo can keep its head upside down under water.

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Catching them in this position, the resurgent boy in a sober explorer is irresistibly impelled to creep up behind and throw stones at them, and then to fall back weak with laughter at the look of injured wonder with which they withdraw their heads from the mud and twist their boneless necks round over their backs to see what this indecent disturbance was about.

Half a million pink flamingoes flying low against a late amber sky are also a wonder and a delight to be remembered.

Ibises. What can one say about ibises, except that they are black as night and white as daylight, and are always graceful and unhurried and dignified? Watching them, one understands that the ancient Egyptians held them sacred.

It was at this lake that the cook got into a fight over a bird with a Galla and got himself stabbed. It was some sort of long-legged water-bird that had fallen to some stray shot fired at a brace of ibises—ibis yields good white chicken meat with a delicate flavor of frog. The cook, with the proper disdain of a superior person, discarded this long-legged bird. A Galla lad of surely not more than fourteen lawless summers, who was lounging and looking at everything, said that it was good to eat. The cook, having the intolerance of all cooks, remarked loftily that only savages would eat such a bird. The boy, all ingenuously, said why no, it was really good, he would eat it himself. And the cook repeated that maybe it was so, but only a savage would eat it. Which was all that any independent boy needed. Without further exchange of badinage he

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swung down the point of his spear and made a lunge at the cook's stomach. The cook was immediately transformed from a superior person to a very frightened one. He let out a scream of mortal terror and jumped like a scared rooster, and contrived an adroit shield out of the frying-pan in his hand. So the blade only ripped down his shin-bone and made a nasty gash in his foot.

Then the heroic leader of the expedition, with superb presence of mind, rushed in and saved the man's life—just as it is the lot of intrepid explorers to do every now and then in those untamed lands. Which means that I had the presence of mind to keep out of reach of the flashing spear and to shout, "Hey, cut that out!" Whereat the boy sulkily desisted from his efforts to get a good thrust past the whirling frying-pan defense.

And to the heroic leader then fell the nasty job of sewing up that cook's leg and doctoring it to the best of his amateur ability. And the cook yowled worse than when he received his fright. But the worst aspect of the case was that we had to give the belligerent youth a cartridge to appease him, and that the cook had to ride while we took it in turns to walk.

It was regretfully that we left this good lake and climbed the sides of a low mountain so thickly strewn with volcanic tufa and a sort of black, razor-edge obsidian that mules had to pick their way and the boys with their naked feet were in sore trouble. It was as we mounted slowly and the view spread out beneath us

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that we began to form a conception of what a splendid lake this Hora-uitu really was.

Monotony of the long climb was avoided by keeping on expecting to find, just over the next ridge, one of the impassable clefts or ravines that the people of the hidden village assured us prevented further progress.

It was a curious, frightened sort of village. Surrounded by an unusually thick and high thorn fence and nestling at the base of a cliff completely screened by thorn bush. We did not know there was a village there until we smelt it.

I suppose all African villages smell more or less. Galla villages are not so bad when one has once adjusted one's mind to accept them—or when one has huddled under a thorn bush at close quarters to a well-greased Galla hunter. It is a sort of faint floating garbary-smoky-rancid-buttery smell.

The people of this hidden village, Jim opined, were either malefactors or runaway slaves; and for some obscure reason of their own they surely did not want us to go over that mountain. Possibly for nothing more definite than some vague idea that where white men once passed there would presently be a road, and their seclusion would thus be destroyed.

However, ridge lifted beyond ridge and valley led into glen, and never a cleft did we see that called for a detour of more than a couple of hundred yards. Good going it was rather. Magnificent going, in fact, after thorn scrub. Here was fine upland grass and shade trees in considerable variety. More grazing to the half square mile than in a day's trek over the flat.

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But—no water. Here in the hills were no hollows where even rain-water could collect. How deep must tree tap roots go, I wonder, where the rain comes in spells of six months apart? And what do koodoo and the various mountain buck and rock baboons drink when there are too many of them to lick the moisture that sometimes condenses on the shady under side of a rock?

Yet that afternoon, as though in answer to the question, it rained for the first time in six months. Sudden black clouds built themselves out of the white cumulous vapor that had been making such a succession of pictures against the ultramarine sky for the past weeks. A cold wind howled over the peaks from nowhere. And then the rain came down upon us in a wild, tempestuous whirl of fury. Heavy, stinging rain, as though to drown in spitefulness all the herbage that had waited for it so long.

Nagadis with pack mules, of course, were strung out anywhere over the last mile or so. Raincoats, of course, were in the packs, anywhere where the boys to whom they had been handed with orders to carry them had stuffed them. And as monkeys when startled lose what little minds they have and chatter in helpless affright, so camp boys, when faced with the master's just wrath, chatter and are enveloped in simian forgetfulness.

I do not know how many of the packs had to be unloaded before the raincoats were found. It doesn't matter. Suffice it that everything, including the contents of the opened packs, was very properly wet first.

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But the law of Abyssinia does not permit one to use boys' skins as impromptu rain shelters.

That was the beginning of the "little rains." From now on rain might be expected any day for the next few days and every day for the next few weeks or so. Then there would be a lull of another two or three weeks, and then—RAIN. The "big rains." Four months of them. And when one has been through the season one knows that the word "big" is miserably inadequate.

Rain! There were rivers to be crossed before we should see the great metropolis again: and dry ravines which would presently be thirty-foot-deep rapids. It behooved us to hurry.

A long, long day over that mountain and a short one in the level brought us to the Zwai Lake again—where all our hippos, according to our Galla friends, had trekked overnight. But this time we were twenty miles across, on the opposite shore to where we had first seen it, and a much improved shore it was. Clear from papyrus reed it was. That terrible mile-wide barrier of mosquito swamp was miraculously absent. Two exquisite little steep-sided green islands, thickly clustered with neat huts, hugged the shore.

There was more population crowded upon these two little islands than over two days' trek on the open plain; and the reason was startlingly illustrative of the actual precariousness of life among this warlike folk: islands were much more secure against sudden attack than were thorn fences.

Lakis, these people were; so called after their islands. They paddled out on frail cigar-shaped bun-

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dles of papyrus reeds to inspect this white camp that suddenly sprang up on their mainland; and they brought untold delicacies. Roasted wheat and fish and fowl and native beer. A nice friendly people.

"*Gumaré*," "hippos?" we asked them doubtfully, remembering the hotel veranda dictum of the Addis Abeba hunter that no hippo had ever been in Zwai. And, "Oh, yes," they astounded us by replying. "Away out there."

We brought the glasses to bear on the tiny, half-submerged island that lay perhaps a couple of miles offshore. And—our voices dropped to unconscious caution—it was true. A whole herd of pinky-brown hippos lying all over each other on a sand shallow.

"Yes, the *gumaré* came and they went," the islanders told us. "Sometimes they were there and sometimes they were not. These had just come. But they were very fierce and they attacked boats that went out at dusk; and one old bull in particular——"

At that we shut them up. We had heard all these local legends about coming and going and about ferocious old bulls in particular. We had been chasing this particular fairy story over the whole lake region. The only point that interested us was whether they would for a backsheesh take us out in their reed floats close enough to these ferocious monsters to get a shot at them.

There was all the demur we expected. Those *gumaré* were very fierce; and it was true, by their fathers' spirits, that they would rush at boats and crunch them like egg-shells; and that old slate-gray bull——

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Any discussion with African natives must be an affair of hours. This one tired out our patience to the point of murder. How long would hippos stand in broad daylight view while we argued? But nothing would move those Lakis. They would not under any circumstances go out so far from shore to attack *gumaré*. But if we would wait, toward late afternoon, just before the dreaded dusk, the *gumaré* would probably begin to move closer, in preparation for going out to feed at a favored place of old which was now rich with untrampled grass. If we would wait till that short remnant of daylight, for a backsheesh of one dollar apiece a small fleet of them would take us out; but no farther than their own islands.

We, I in particular—for mighty hunters who write books must, according to all the rules, bring back trophies to prove their prowess—fumed and stamped up and down the beach. Hippos cautiously swimming inshore would offer no more than the difficult snap shot at the thin wedge between nose and ears as they came up to snort a breath before sinking again. And from a frail unstable reed float at that. I tried to hire a reed raft myself—I had used a double-paddle canoe as often as they had—to buy one, even. But an idea so new to the African mind would require two days and a consultation of the village elders to consider.

Wait we had to—and I spent all of the time seeing that my rifle was clean and oiled and that the sight adjustments were exactly, to the minutest fraction of an inch, where they should be.

A Joshua delayed that afternoon. But it did begin

to grow late at last; and anxious glasses showed that the pinky-brown island was slowly disintegrating. Bits broke off it and quietly disappeared. It dwindled; and presently it was all gone.

Where now were all the brave men who would man the fleet? They were not so many as had at first talked about it. But the usual epithets of scorn—women, little children—and silver dollars displayed aroused a certain response. With much hesitation and much more telling to each other of the dark equivalent for "let George do it"; and after weighing the dollars in their hands to make sure they were real and fat ones, a small fleet of six reed rafts prepared to go out.

And it was high time. Narrow wedges of slate began to show for seconds at a time and to disappear with a "*pfoof*" under a spray of vapor. They were within the outer edge of the islands. In another half-hour the dusk would begin to creep over the water; and then nothing would drive the fleet out over the precarious sea.

But delay, even in Africa, must come to an end. We nearly exploded with impatience but we did get away. The biggest of the reed boats was barely big enough to float two men. One did not sit in such a thing, of course. There was no concavity to sit into. One sat on it, rather, semi-submerged in the water, and kept one's balance by paddling with one's feet.

And then the village humorist, from safe ashore, called that sometimes crocodiles sneaked up under reed rafts and bit people's legs off. I am prepared to take oath that I did not spasmodically jerk my legs out of

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the crawly wet. Proof of which is that the boat did not immediately roll over. Besides, I was too intent upon watching a great gray wedge that was intent upon watching us, and which did not seem to be half as nervous about the boat as the boats were about it.

Other, smaller wedges showed from time to time. But it was this big dark gray one that I wanted to come close to. This surely must be the fabled ferocious bull. Or any other bull. So long as it was a big one, I promised myself that I should believe every one of the stories that the natives should tell about how that individual *gumaré* had eaten reed boats whole with full cargoes of lovely king's daughters.

But come close the fleet would not. A hundred yards away those stout boatmen remained and no closer. Whether the tales about the ferocity of this beast—or of one like it—were true or not, there was no doubt about the islanders' fear of it. Every time it would snort and blow a spray they would hurriedly back paddle. Every time it would submerge there would be a scurry.

"It would swim below water and would heave up under a boat," they insisted; "and then where would we all be?"

"In the soup," remarked Jim with nonchalant cheerfulness.

He too, it seemed, had read Sir Samuel Baker's classic book on African hunting, in which the old master relates how a bull hippo had done just this thing to a dugout canoe not ten feet distant from his own. And it did seem to be disquietingly true. The thing came

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distinctly closer each time it submerged. How close to where the boats had been before they fled it was difficult to judge. But certainly closer.

"Take a chance, Mac," Jim began to urge me—I had the heavier gun. "Take a shot the next time it lifts its head and looks. It's not getting any lighter, and these fellows are scared all green and they won't stay out much longer."

But I swore that I'd be damned if I'd shoot at a smear of gray in the water a hundred yards away out of a rolling log that heaved with each dip of the paddle. Particularly not since my boatman paddled all the time, and since most of the time he kept the boat's nose slanted for a quick turn and run, and I had to twist myself more than half round even to see the beast. What! fire one shot and then trek over the rest of Africa to get another chance?

No, I wanted at least a reasonable hope of getting a sight on that vanishing wedge. At the limit of exasperation I got my boatman to understand that he was to cease paddling when that slice of nose and forehead appeared, and that he was to sit still and not wiggle his toes.

And when, after a dozen more attempts, the man was beginning to be drilled into it, the beast executed a maneuver that nearly ruined the whole hunt. It had been watching us and blowing angrily through its nose for quite a long stretch of seconds. My shoulder and left arm ached from holding my rifle at the aim hoping to catch a moment of steadiness, when suddenly the beast gave a snort and heaved itself half out of

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the water. Like a great gray whaleback it looked; and with a vast splash it dived.

Then there was a panic. Those heavy, water-logged reed rafts might have competed in a fast canoe race. That was the last sign, the men yammered. The big brute was now infuriated and was after us in earnest. Had those things been light canoes the men would never have stopped before they beached them high ashore. It was only when muscle and wind gave out that we were able to make them hear that no submarine torpedo was on its way to us. There was the pursuing wedge in sight again on the surface.

But in spite of the frenzied sprint, it was nearer. Much nearer than those wary paddle-men had let it come before. Perhaps up to seventy-five yards.

And then suddenly came my chance, as chances do sometimes if one waits long enough. The boat was momentarily steady. The great gray head was slightly lifted. My sights swung into line.

Dusk was upon us. If I let this chance go I would surely not get another that day. And would we ever persuade the men out again after their panic?

I fired.

Smack, was the instant crack of the bullet on hard bone. The huge head heaved up; the shoulders rose sluggishly high out of the water; then rolled over sideways and disappeared under.

"By golly, you got him!" shouted Jim. "I saw the splash where you hit! Fair in the center of the forehead! Come home to supper. He'll be floating in twenty-four hours."

So the long hunt was ended. I don't know how much to believe about the individuality of this ferocious man-eating hippo. Probably none, of course; possibly some. Of one thing I am convinced, however—that the hippos of that lake region are not quite the stupid and docile beasts that they are in other parts of Africa where the natives have been prevented by their white rulers from getting hold of guns.

But I promised myself I should believe all the stories that the natives should tell about this particular hippo. I should have to. For I had already made another promise to my lady—to bring home a pair of hippo feet for umbrella-stands and a yard-square slab of inch-thick hippo hide which would dry as hard as an oak board and would make a tea-table top that would be the envy of all her friends.

Thus has primitive man made oath to lay trophies of his male prowess before his admiring lady's feet. Thus has the chivalry of knighthood sworn. Thus do mighty hunters commit themselves to-day. Thus do the slayers of lesser creatures, beautiful fur-bearing beasts, and birds, excuse themselves—I mean hunters, people who kill swiftly with guns. I don't speak of that beastly anomaly of civilization, the fur industry. And thus do I—inconsistent male—excuse behind the feminine whimsies of my lady my lust to slay. Let the ladies judge me. Was the killing justified?

CHAPTER X

THE EVIL EYE

MAN proposes and—in Africa—the local godlings with their attendant superstitions dispose. I did get that big hippo right in the center of the forehead, and twenty-four hours later he was floating belly up. But during those twenty-four hours events transpired; outcomes of one of those unbelievably silly little happenings upon which hinge life and death in this impossible land.

The hunting fleet of reed rafts returned amidst congratulations. Each valiant boatman received his dollar and there was rejoicing. Here was untold wealth, easily earned. The white men paid what was promised—which was more than the most sanguine of those islanders had really believed at any time. On the morrow there would be meat in large masses for all the huts on the island; the white men didn't want any of it. They were curious folk, these white men; but apparently quite all right.

So the Laki people brought chickens and gummy native beer and fish—no eggs; the Lakis, unlike the Gallas, eat eggs themselves—and they spread themselves all over the camp and fingered everything and

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peered into the tents and clucked ohs and ahs and stared and laughed at nothing at all and had a good time generally. It would have been an all-night party but for the rain.

Like ground-hogs and badgers, those wild island people smelt the rain coming and scurried for their reed rafts to paddle home to the shelter of their huts. After the shooting, the *gumarés* wouldn't worry them for that night at any rate. They would all come back in the morning to see if we might still be there—if the rain hadn't washed us away. Everything was jolly and friendly, as it should be.

And then how it rained! That night the "little rains" broke. The first real fall of the six months' pent-up monsoon. We had made camp under a magnificent fig-tree, a giant with vast spreading branches that swept the ground and gave space for all the tents as well as all the mules.

You efficient campers of auto and canoe experience at home, vent your scorn upon the mess and the tents that are necessary to carry three white people through a six weeks' trek in Africa. Count the canvas city and groan.

The tent that was four fifths my lady's and one little corner mine, the well-known "marquee" of our sporting-goods stores; eight by eight, four pegs, single pole, sewn-in ground cloth, bugproof, waterproof, with extra locally made fly. Good; a tent one need not be ashamed of. Jim's tent: the saggy, soggy wall affair familiar in photographs of African travel, with poles and far-stretching ropes and pegs sufficient to entangle

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an army corps. I have already derided it. A cook tent, small, but built by those expert outfitters who sit at home in London and design things for African travel; therefore, as sprawly as may well be borne. An askari tent for the camp boys; more poles and pegs, but, marvelously enough, no ropes; for the steep sides fasten direct to the ground—which can be done all right, if all the pegs have not been lost. This thing consists of a single thickness of waterproofed cotton and leaks as well as may be expected; which is why Frangi Bwana has to provide each askari or boy with a good blanket. Another similar tent for the nagadis.

Consider this canvas city all under one splendid tree; and with it all the baggage of ten pack mules, and the mules themselves tethered down in between for protection from the inevitable hyenas and an occasional leopard. And then consider getting all this mess of baggage somewhere, somehow, under shelter in the dark in preparation for rain.

Since the efficient handling of tents and baggage constitutes one of the most important of the ropes that an expedition must know, shame impels me to explain the need of ten pack mules' worth of baggage for three lone white folks. Three reasonably energetic people at home can hike all over the United States with just as much baggage as they can carry in their ruck-sacks. But in Africa things mount up mysteriously and terribly.

One reason, of course, is that there is no opportunity for replenishing. Everything for the whole trip must be taken along; and everything includes some things

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that may perhaps not be used at all, but without which it would be foolhardy to go out. Heavy stuff, all of it, too. A tool kit. A medicine kit—don't ever forget a very complete medical kit with a good book of what the symptoms may mean. Ammunition; enough of it to be sure that it will be enough. Emergency canned food. Rice, beans, flour. Nobody who has not made a six weeks' trip away from every source of supply will believe what a frightful weight of flour three people will eat up in soggy bread when no sort of vegetable is to be had for any money.

Another reason is the food that the army of attendants of a caravan must have. And, must, means of necessity. Boys and nagadis just will not go into the bush unless they are assured of the safety that attaches to a none too low minimum number of themselves.

And yet another—and the most cogent—reason for bulk is the lack of pack saddles. The forewarned traveler who would an-expeditioning go will bring pack saddles with him and will thereby save one mule load out of every five as well as the backs of his mules. And he will buy saddles made for burros; for those just fit the lean flanked Abyssinian mules.

The system of nagadi packing takes its full and due time. It is one of the permanent exasperations of trek to decide upon an early get-away, before the heat of the sun should become oppressive; to get up at six in the morning and to rout out the nagadis—and then to fret away an hour while they groan and stretch and

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light a fire and cook their breakfast. This is the custom of the land and nothing can speed it up.

The traveler who fumes and dallies seriously with the thought of shooting the head nagadi is forced to recognize his own foolishness; for, after all, it must be admitted that these wretched people eat nothing else until nightfall. But why must they make their leisurely meal exactly at the hour when one is all packed and ready to start? That's what drives one to impotent frenzy.

After the last mouthful has been beastially bolted and the last lip swinishly smacked and the last bovine belch has given expression to animal surfeit, comes another frenzy of delay which one blames partly upon the nagadis and partly upon the other beasts of the land.

The mules must be caught. With the first dawning of daylight, as soon as the hyenas will have scurried for their holes, one of the nagadis has risen and turned loose all the tethered mules to graze. Their contract has stipulated that they shall cut grass for the mules' feed, since the beasts cannot be hobbled out to graze on account of the hyena menace. But it is easier to let them graze in the early morning than to cut grass for them the previous evening; and how can a nagadi understand the white man's desire to hurry away? Any more than a mule, that hasn't had nearly enough to eat between dawn and six o'clock. A fact which the nagadi knows as well as the mule; and so, since they are his beasts under contract, he is in no more of a hurry to catch them than they are to be caught.

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A full hour of frenzied delay can be written off to mule-catching. After that, the phenomenon of packing as it was done in Africa in the days of Ham.

Nagadis pack mules according to the most primitive and inhuman system known. They begin by making a crude sort of double sling of rawhide thong, into each bight of which they stuff an approximately even weight and then wrap it, mule and all, into a knotty parcel with two hundred more feet of rawhide. Last minute odds and ends can be thrown into a sort of cradle on top and lashed down with yet more rawhide.

Two unbelievable hours of fume and fret go to the packing of ten mules. I don't exaggerate one iota when I state that I have not known a morning's get-away in less than four hours after cursing the nagadis out of their tent. Nor can any of this delay be laid to mere amateur bungling. Caravan-conductor Jim brings twenty years of Africa to bear upon trekking, and he says out of his experience:

"What's the use of fretting yourself into a fever? You're in their country. You can't drive these people with a kiboko."

And then, when one does get away after those four hours of frenzy, the inherent stupidity of this primitive packing commences to show itself within the first half-hour of a caravan's start. Nor do I exaggerate again when I state that I have not known of a morning's trek during which at least four out of ten packs have not needed adjustment, tightening up of ropes, or complete repacking, each with its attendant kicking, shouting, and delay—for it is the inexorable rule:

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one cannot leave nagadis out of sight with the packs.

By mid-day one can generally feel that the weak spots have all shown up and been attended to. And then the traveler, slave of habit, feels that it is time for a rest and a light lunch; and the crafty nagadis, hoping ever that the white man will be too weary to start the fight all over again, feel that they can try to unload all packs and rest for remainder of the day.

The devilry of their cunning lies in the fact that the stranger has not the heart to keep the mules standing with their packs for a couple of hours while he rests. For this beastly packing results in the most hideous sore backs and galls that a traveler can dream about in a nightmare of cruelty. Nothing less than a photograph can begin to describe the condition of sore back under which a nagadi will pack and drive a mule with the callousness of a gorilla.

One turns sick and demands of the chief gorilla whether there is no remedy; and he, if his mule looks so bad that it is like to drop on the road, applies the remedy that centuries of inhumanity have evolved. He heats an iron rod in the fire; his minions lash and throw the mule; and he brands it in long parallel stripes down either side of the sore. And the horrible part of it all is that the process does seem to do the poor beast good. A mule so branded, if not packed again over the sore and hurt, will quickly heal up. But how often is it that packs can be divided up and distributed so as to leave a branded mule free for a week or so?

And to what extent does all this reflect upon the

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stranger who travels? How deeply is he implicated as an accessory? How long and how often must a man of decent humanity stop to let tired mules rest or galled mules heal when he is contracted with a nagadi to pay one dollar for every day for every mule; and when, if one mule must stop, all must stop; and when, in a fly-bepested bush country, it takes at least two weeks for a gall sore to heal?

Before admitting too heavy a blame to my own account I propound for consideration the thought: People have traveled in Africa with mules or with other animals for countless generations. Some of them have been great men whose names have gone down in history. Some of them have been missionaries of the Christian God. They have not, between all of them, managed to alter the way of Africa.

Of course, I have taken oath that I will never again contract with a nagadi, and that I shall go my ways and seek my opportunities to do scathe to the breed whensoever and howsoever I shall come across it. In all my future comings and goings I shall hire independently or shall buy, so that I shall have control of exactly how and when my animals shall be packed and when they shall be fed and by whom they shall be driven. And then upon my own head be the condition of my beasts.

On this occasion I was helpless. As helpless as every other stranger who has ever had to travel against time and, as in this instance, possibly life and death.

Which brings me back to our camp and those Laki

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Islanders on that night of the breaking of the little monsoon. One must witness the breaking of a monsoon to understand how it rained. We were fortunate—or let me take credit for being foresighted—in that we had pitched camp under that splendid tree whose huge branches dipped again to the ground beyond our camp fringe almost like the banyan-tree of India—of which this fig, by the way, is a relative.

We were shielded from the direct beat of the pelting drops and from the demon hurricane that came with the chilling of the atmosphere. But nothing could shelter us from the flood under foot. The ground was one universal river six inches deep. Camp gear, buckets, grub boxes, just floated away in it and stranded far out against roots and bushes.

Our own tent, American made, with sewn-in ground cloth, remained bone dry; though we could feel the rush of waters beneath the floor cloth. And my lady and I were selfish enough to lie still in our cots and giggle and to ask no questions about how others fared. We knew. They were wet along with everything else. Sufficient unto the night is the evil thereof. We well knew that in the morning we would have enough to do to see that stranded goods and gear should be retrieved and overhauled and unpacked and spread out to dry.

And we didn't underestimate one little bit of the mess or trouble or dirt. Ten mule-loads of wet camp gear required all the effort of three white people and five camp boys throughout all of a good sunny day

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to sort out and half dry in preparation for the next sunny day.

And our good friends the Laki Islanders came over in their reed boats and laughed at us and helped us spread things out in the sun, eager as children to get a chance to look at and to handle the wonderful things that white men carried about the wilderness with them. And we let them look and handle and paw everything over. We were not in the least bit nervous of pilfering. They were our friends.

We took photographs of everything. Of all the mess and confusion, and of all the Lakis and their childish wonder and delight. They didn't know what we were doing. We showed them the miracle of looking through a field-glass, and we pretended that a camera was some similar sort of apparatus through which we had to inspect the proper conduct of affairs.

And then one of the nagadis—I could never find out which one—thoughtless monkey, or, more probably, malicious devil, angry that his gang had not had all their way with us all the time—told them that we were taking photographs. Though these simple people didn't recognize the process when they saw it, they all knew about the insidious witchcraft by hearsay. A photograph was a form of sorcery practised by unprincipled men whereby they captured a man's shadow and put it on paper and therewith made a magic by means of which they gained control of that man's thoughts and actions and, in fact, enslaved his whole life. It was the universal superstition of primitive minds. Just as mediæval Europe believed that a sor-

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cerer could work evil upon an enemy by making an image of him in wax, the same idea held with these people regarding the more modern image on paper.

Immediately there came a change. The laughter and child wonderment turned to sullen looks. No man knew who had already been caught in the witch trap. Most of them felt that at some time or other they had stood in range of that gleaming eye that clicked. Men put down the various wonderments that they had been handling and collected up their spears.

Jim came up to me with a pretense of unconcern and said: "I'm hanged if I know what it is, Mac; but somebody's done something that has given big offense. Keep your gun loose and handy; and from right now we keep each other always in the corner of our eye. Don't let a bunch of them surround you. And don't be the kind of damn fool who's ashamed to holler for help."

There spoke wisdom born of experience. But there was no attack. This thing was too big to be handled rashly. It was a question for the witch doctors to decide. So our recent friends just collected up their weapons and withdrew. In ten minutes they were gone, every last one of them. They didn't bolt; they were too sturdy and independent a folk for that. They just retreated, sullenly, muttering and looking sideways under their dark brows; and in ten minutes they were all in their reed boats and out of range. A good spear's throw from shore they hovered about, as though that would be out of reach too of the evil eye; and there they stayed, calling to one another till, after an hour

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or so, they seemed to come to some decision and all paddled swiftly to their islands.

And that was the last we saw of them. Glasses revealed hardly a movement among the island huts; only a furtive figure now and then hurrying to the great council houses at the summits. Something of secrecy and importance was going on. That was all that we knew. And we knew—as every explorer knows—that when the savage withdraws to his secret conferences there is no knowing what crazy form his decision may take.

But glasses—alas! for the irony of them—revealed four sturdy posts sticking up far out on the lake; and later, as the posts rose higher with the coming of the evening, a fat round gray bulge from the four corners of which they grew.

There was our hippo, belly up and high, and needing only half a dozen boats with their stout paddle-men to tow it ashore. We stood on our shore and shouted and screamed, glinting silver dollars in the low slanting sun. We sent our camp boys a couple of miles along the shore front to where fishermen seemed to have ventured close inshore, to offer backsheesh, many dollars, if only a couple of brave men would come with a boat; if only they would *lend* us a boat.

But no. Even our askaris were tainted with the suspicion of our sorcery. The fishermen withdrew out of range as they approached. They wouldn't speak to them; they maintained a sullen silence to all shouts and offers of more silver dollars than they had ever seen. We were left ostracized on our mainland; out-

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cast from every form of communication. It was then that we began to realize that our offense had been something a lot more serious than even we had thought.

This, the traveler in the far places may accept as a universal rule and must note down as one of the most important of the ropes of expeditioning. So important that it can well stand elaboration. Savages, as long as they stand around and talk—even though they may not jest—need never be feared. It is when they draw together into groups and whisper that one needs to keep one's wits about him and to watch them. And when they withdraw altogether to go into secret consultation, then it is for the stranger to get up and go away swiftly from that place; for there is no knowing in what unguessable form of reprisal fear engendered in their child minds may break out.

An anxious evening fell upon us, discussing just how seriously we had offended and just what those island people thought and what they might do. Our camp boys, who might have been expected to understand something of the psychology of these cousins of theirs, were as useless as camp boys have always been throughout African history. They could do no more than look gray and huddle together and mutter to one another in the low, moaning tones of unhappy monkeys; nor did their uneasiness help to cheer us to any extent.

And that night there were drums. From the summits of both islands; from the big council huts—we could

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tell by the high direction of the sound. Incessant drums with an angry rhythm that sank and rose in waves of volume; and now and then, rising above the drums, a long-drawn humming of the voices of many men. The sounds droned ominously across the water, recalling those gruesome stories of wild voodoo ceremonies that that David Sparks man writes with such intimate knowledge.

We shook one of the boys, a Galla, into sufficient coherence to tell us whether he could translate what the rhythm meant. Was it war, perhaps? And he said, no, not war; witch doctors. And he added the explanation that among his own people this was the drumming that witch doctors made to drive away a spell when a man was dying.

He meant to cheer us. But the question in our minds was: was it possible that dying men needed the ministration of the witch doctors on *both* islands? And what if some wretched man should die of any one of the hundred ailments to which savages are subject, how long would it take the savage mind to convince itself that the spell of which he had died was the immediate result of the sorcery of the glass eye that clicked and captured men's shadows; and how much longer, then, before the drums changed to the *boom-bup-buppa-boom* of war?

Our askaris were all of Galla or Ogadenia stock, not so very far removed from the Laki folk. But at that, they were nervous enough themselves. Our nagadis, however, were some sort of bastard breed evolved out of the casual comings and goings of all

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people who traveled anywhere in Abyssinia. Being nobodies, they aped the manners and dress of the ruling Amhara race, and as such were enemies of all that conquered country of Arussi. They were very properly frightened about it all. They chattered that these were bad people and that we must get out of that place immediately, before we should all be killed.

One of our Galla camp boys had been sufficiently nervous about the outcome to creep to our tent and tell us that photography had been the cause of the trouble and that it had been a nagadi who had given the game away. It was evidence of more than just a little uneasiness, for all camp followers will always hang together as close as devils in a belfry before they will squeal upon one another to the stranger in the land.

I tried to pretend to the nagadis, therefore, that I was perfectly at my ease; that our party was well armed and had nothing to fear for ourselves; but that if they wanted to get away I would inconvenience myself and let them load up—if they would first tell me which one of their number had spilled the beans for us; and that one I would leave behind.

My bluff failed miserably. They were abject. They groveled and they embraced my feet. But no man of them, they swore, had breathed a word. I shrugged nonchalance and tried to make the condition an ultimatum. But I was hopelessly worsted by nagadi clannishness. From which I have since then concluded that it must have been their leader who had told, in

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revenge for the many occasions when he had not got the better of us; and he would have murdered them had they given his name away.

So there we all sat in the dark, arguing and listening to the distant drums, all tense to hear them change to the unmistakable *boom-bup-buppa-boom*.

It is impossible, of course, to guess how serious the position might or might not have been, since it was never put to the test. The question was settled by rain again. Screaming, lashing rain that beat out all other sound in the roar of waters. Providential, heavenly rain. For, whatever the spells on those islands, whatever the deaths and disasters, we knew that no frail reed flotillas would attempt to cross the lake in that hurricane.

That rain caught our camp better prepared. We knew that rain was to be expected every night after the first break, and our various gear and grub boxes were stacked high and well lashed down. Morning found the gear all where it had been the night before. At least, so we imagined. For that morning, for the first and only time, the nagadis were ahead of us. No one of us knew at what hour they rose that morning; or, rather, that night. But the beginning of wet dawn found them up and packed and ready to go—though mules, they had been swearing the day before, were tired to death and they had branded two of them that same afternoon.

And we—we gave no thought either to wet gear or to sick mules or to dead hippo. For once we were in agreement with the nagadis, and we went from that

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place with speed, desperately glad to leave in permanent doubt the question of just what those Laki Islanders might or might not have done.

CHAPTER XI

A LOST CARAVAN

THAT was the beginning of enforced home-coming. Not on account of possible angry natives on the trail. On account of something more definite and inevitable. Rain. The season was upon us. In a few hours, within the duration of each downpour, the dry gullies of yesterday would be rushing torrents, carrying along all the desiccated carcasses of animals that had crawled into them to die during the last six months and had escaped the vultures. Deep cuts in the ground, these gullies, with sudden, perpendicular walls, very often no more than six or ten feet apart but maybe twenty feet deep; one of the chief reasons why people cannot travel at night except by brightest moonlight. But the gullies, if one can but sit down and wait and if the next downpour will hold off for a few hours, will run themselves out, emptying their rush of surface water into rivers.

In a few days the little rivers would be foaming muddy rapids with drowned cattle floating in them. The Hawash that we had splashed through up to our animals' knees a few weeks before would be thirty

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feet deep, of thick chocolate swirling along at six miles an hour.

But there would be worse than waters to overcome; and that was a pest that required no week or so to develop. It was immediately in evidence with the first rainfall. *Chicka*. All the upland plains of Abyssinia are surfaced with a fine, reddish black earth, its consistency that of a mixture of loam and clay. Splendid soil for growing things in where one can supply adequate artificial drainage. But a compost that becomes a thick paste of many feet in depth where the rain must fall and just soak in.

The only favorable thing that can be said of *chicka* is that it can grow worse. That is to say that, as more rain falls upon it, it becomes deeper. In the very beginning of the rainy season, when it has absorbed but a few inches of water, it clings to boots and hoofs in gummy ten-pound masses that are too gluey to be kicked off and that can be scraped off only with the back of a hunting knife.

A week or so later animals sink knee-deep with each step, and the sticky withdrawal of each hoof in turn sounds like a continuous popping of corks. Animals *can* be driven through *chicka* at this stage; but it is killing going, and four or five miles is the limit of a day's trek.

Later again, when the rains are in full force, animals just sink belly-deep and there they stick. Travel then is impossible. It is not the rivers that close the land during the rains. Rivers can be swum or rafted across, even with a caravan of pack mules. It

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is *chicka* that closes the roads. That is what is meant by the familiar expression, "held up by the rains."

And it is extraordinary what a terror the rainy season inspires. It is something that grips the native mind with a far greater intensity than is warranted by the mere inconvenience and trouble of travel. It is an actual fear; a hereditary conviction that the rainy season of sickness and disaster and death is upon them. And it is then their hereditary handicap, of course, that they just lie down and give up.

The complete and immediate demoralization of nagadis and camp boys with the coming of the rainy season is one of the phenomena of inexplicable Africa and is one more of the burdens that the citizen who will travel must take upon his already plentifully weighted shoulders. It requires a clear head and a strong hand to bring a caravan in in the rains.

That was not a good home-coming. Riding was slow and hard on the animals. Walking was worse. The camp boys wrapped themselves in their blankets and plodded miserably with all the expression of dressed-up monkeys who must perform under the inexorable eye of the master in the wings. The nagadis, in a frenzy to get to the shelter of home, drove their mules mercilessly; and the poor beasts suffered accordingly.

We, my no longer tenderfoot lady and I, rode on ahead breaking trail. We didn't want to look at our caravan in its misery. Jim had survived twenty years of Africa to harden him to that sort of thing and we

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left him shamelessly to bring the caravan along. And we duly paid our penalty for breaking that inexorable law of the bush which commands that one shall not leave one's caravan out of one's sight.

It was the day upon which we hoped to strike the Hawash River again—if the Hawash turned where we calculated it should do according to the lay of the distant hills. It was still quite early in the morning when we met that universal bane of travel, the man who knew all about the road as well as all the distances and the stopping-places and the fords. The pest exists everywhere, whether one is traveling along a paved highway in an automobile or crossing a desert on a camel.

This one told us that, sure, the Hawash River was just over there, beyond those hills—he pointed to what looked to me to be a quite unlikely break in the hills. But he was quite positive; he had come from there that same morning, and it would take us four hours to reach the river if we crawled.

In the bush, where there are no mile posts, and distances are reckoned by the individual's conception of time, one must take into consideration the means of locomotion. This man was riding on a reasonably decent conditioned horse; so I made the interpreter ask him whether he reckoned four hours galloping, or trotting, or walking? Four hours, pack mule pace, he assured us, and not a minute more if the caravan crawled.

I have never understood that particular specimen of the road pest. Was he a roving imbecile, or was he

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a misanthropic moron obsessed by the devil of misdirection? That was about nine o'clock in the morning that we met him. So my lady and I pushed on, figuring to locate the ford, cross it, and find a good place to camp on the other side.

One boy followed us. I have never quite understood that boy either. He was a good youth, a product of a mission school, who spoke some English. But we had decided to dismiss him as soon as we got home, because his training had made him a little superior to his job and he had learned the trick of getting frightful headaches whenever there was hard work to do. Headaches so bad that he would have to lie down and groan; and when he had swallowed enough aspirin to give him heart flutter, the pain would transfer itself to his stomach.

Besides, we suspected him of having picked up *yikuck*. *Yikuck* is an affliction caused by a microscopic bug belonging to that pestilential genus of skin parasites of which the best-known species is the one that produces scabies. The *yikuck* bug burrows in and then stays there. Its life cycle, unlike chiggers or such lesser agents of intolerable itch, does not necessitate its leaving its host at any time. It excavates an intricate series of tiny passages under the skin and propagates there and spreads rapidly. Its presence becomes known by an itching many times as bad as that caused by chiggers—which I have had and know all about—and by little red pustules where the home nests have been established. If not eradicated by strong penetrative ointments, they poison the skin so that ulcers

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break out all over the body and eventually, in extreme cases, the joints may be affected and fingers and toes may drop off. Many cases of supposed leprosy are no more than the ravages of unchecked *yikuck*. The disease is very prevalent in many parts of Abyssinia, and is so easily transferable that it may be acquired by a mere shaking of hands.

This is what we suspected our good mission boy of having picked up—he scratched himself more assiduously than a baboon. So we had determined to let him go. But—this is what I have wondered about—was he a mind reader? Did he have some psychological insight, and was it therefore that he came with us in order to accumulate some good marks in his favor?

At all events, his faithful following of us that day saved him his job. We kept him on afterward—and it is possible that we paid for our foolish appreciation.

We pushed on then, we two on our mules, and the boy plodding behind. Lunch we decided to postpone. We had taken a hurried cup of coffee that morning before starting, and we decided that hardened explorers could well get along without wasting time for a meal before we were all comfortably settled in camp. So right blithely did we go ahead. We made considerably better pace than a caravan crawl, and after a full four hours came to a place where we would either have to edge to the right to climb over that unlikely looking break in the hills that our misinformant had pointed out; or edge to the left to climb a low saddle-back that our common sense told us ought to be the right direction.

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The time that had elapsed before we reached this point had given us ground to doubt that crazy rider's reliability; quite sufficient to encourage our sense of direction to outweigh the unlikely information.

So we edged to the left and pushed on another couple of hours. The top of the rise showed us water ahead—a good two hours ahead.

"Ha," we told each other, "the Hawash!" and we cursed that rider for a fool of poor time judgment and pushed on again. But I was suspicious about that water. The Hawash River, like all other rivers in that country, ought to be flowing along in a deep trench in the ground. One ought not to see it until one stood on the very brink. But we kept pushing on.

We had to. We who had fondly hoped to cross the Hawash ford and await our caravan in time for lunch were facing the shades of night falling fast, with the grub boxes and bed-rolls far behind us somewhere in the bush. To sit down and wait was impracticable. We were traveling, not on any road, but in a general direction. In that maze of thorn scrub an army transport column could have passed half a mile or more to either side of us all unknown to us and might still have been in the right direction. To sit in the expectation of the caravan following our exact trail was too thin a hope. We had crossed too many other wandering mule and cattle trails. No, the Hawash ford was our agreed-upon objective, and to the ford we must push on.

So on we pushed.

We became so sore from riding—the nagadis' own

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anxiety to get home had enabled a six-o'clock start that morning—that we took pity on the boy and both dismounted to let him ride. We plodded on on foot. *Chicka* clung to our boots in gummy gobs. We were able to appreciate then how hard that kind of going must be on animals that had four feet with which to collect lumps of unshakable mud.

The lurking anxiety forced itself into speech. Was it possible that the fool had been right and that we were the greater fools for not having followed his direction? We blamed each other with acrimony for having been pig-headed enough to follow our own guess about the road. I, having been the deciding factor, received my full measure of the onus. And we plodded on.

We reached that water. And of course it wasn't the Hawash. It was a shallow, reedy lake crammed with egrets and tall marabout storks in exquisite Japanese poses against the low sun. We didn't stop to admire. We plodded on.

Dusk was upon us. Hunger was insistently with us. Our caravan, food, tents, bedding, were somewhere behind us; the wicked little bush gods alone knew where. Ten hours after we had met that road maniac, ten hours of steady going considerably faster than a caravan crawl, we at last saw a fig-tree, the kind of tree that grows along river banks. We dragged our weighted feet to an almost hurry. Fifty yards beyond it we stood suddenly upon the brink; and there at last, in its trench, just where it should have been, was the Hawash River.

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Deep looking in the dusk and swirling muddily. But there was no doubt about that being the ford. Mule tracks went down to it along a shelving sand-spit. Another sand-spit showed dimly and diagonally on the other side. Below, a crocodile grunted gutturally. All the marks of a ford. We didn't attempt to cross. Even if the caravan should be right upon our heels, it would be too dark to get the beasts across. It is difficult enough to drag and beat a suspicious old pack mule through a wayside puddle at any time in broad daylight. To get a caravan to face dark water is impossible. There was nothing for it but to await our grub boxes and bed-rolls and tent right there and to hope that the river would not rise much higher during the night.

So we waited under the fig-tree. We turned the famished mules loose to snatch what grazing they could before dark, and we spent the remaining minutes of dusk in a futile scramble to collect enough fire-wood to burn a guiding beacon. Never was there a spot so destitute of deadwood. What we needed were logs, tree trunks, to make a bonfire that would at least keep the hyenas away; and all we could find were a few damp sticks, which we supplemented by pulling dryish twigs from the great sprawling branches above.

Then the darkness of a cloudy night was upon us, and we knew that unless the caravan, by some miracle of hard driving, might be within ten minutes of the place, we would remain without food—since six o'clock that morning—which didn't very much matter; without blankets—which mattered a great deal more; for

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Abyssinian nights at seven thousand feet of elevation blow a good two blankets' worth of cold; without tent—which mattered a very great deal indeed; for rain at night was a heavy certainty.

Without even—we feared for a terrible moment—light! But that excellent mission-trained boy who had followed us so faithfully—let it be whispered—smoked cigarettes in secret; and when we deplored our own lack of any bad habits at all, he shamefacedly confessed to a box of matches in his pocket. So we did have fire. But a paltry little flicker of smoky twigs it was instead of the blaze that we needed.

Then the beasts of the night, the hyenas, began to howl, and we hurried to catch our mules as best we might in the dark. One, we surrounded and captured after a little maneuvering. But the other, my own beast, the fractious one that had always added a full fifteen minutes to the matutinal mule hunt, was at first too wise to be caught before at least some of its hunger had been appeased, and later, as the gaunt great hyenas began to circle close, too madly terrified to let anything approach.

We spent, it seemed, half a swearful night trying to save that mule's life, with intervals of running back to arrange a few more careful twigs on the fire and blowing our lungs out to keep our flicker alive. After that we expended what was left of our stock of vicious vituperation on the mule and hoped that the hyenas *would* get it, and we came back to devote our whole combined efforts to our expiring fire.

My virtuous lady wishes it to be made clear that

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it was the mission boy and myself that said all that to the mule. She had no voice in it. It was she who kept the vital spark alive during our periods of running around our fig-tree chasing mules and throwing stones at overbold hyenas. The fire, we felt, was more important than either. For other things began to howl and growl out of a patch of thick bush round a near-by swamp. It is a hideous phenomenon of African night that when one is particularly without shelter and at one's greatest discomfort, all sorts of new and unknown beasts give vent to unpleasant noises out of the appallingly near darkness. A fire on such a night, even a glow of embers, is an amazing comfort.

Then with midnight came the rain and accomplished in a minute what we had been unable to do in half a night. Fierce, lashing rain brought our fractious mule to hurried shelter under the branches of our fig-tree and drove the hyenas and other beasts to their holes; for nothing that doesn't have to stay out when the monsoon opens the heavens wide and lets itself loose. We were among the few that had to.

That was a wet and cold night; and through it all our priceless mission boy crouched over the feebly gasping fire with a utensil that had called ridicule and derision down upon him throughout all our trek—an umbrella. And my lady and I forgave him all his laziness and headaches and stood gratefully in the warm smoke.

Daylight still pelted with cold rain. But the Hawash was rising. Our caravan was we did not know

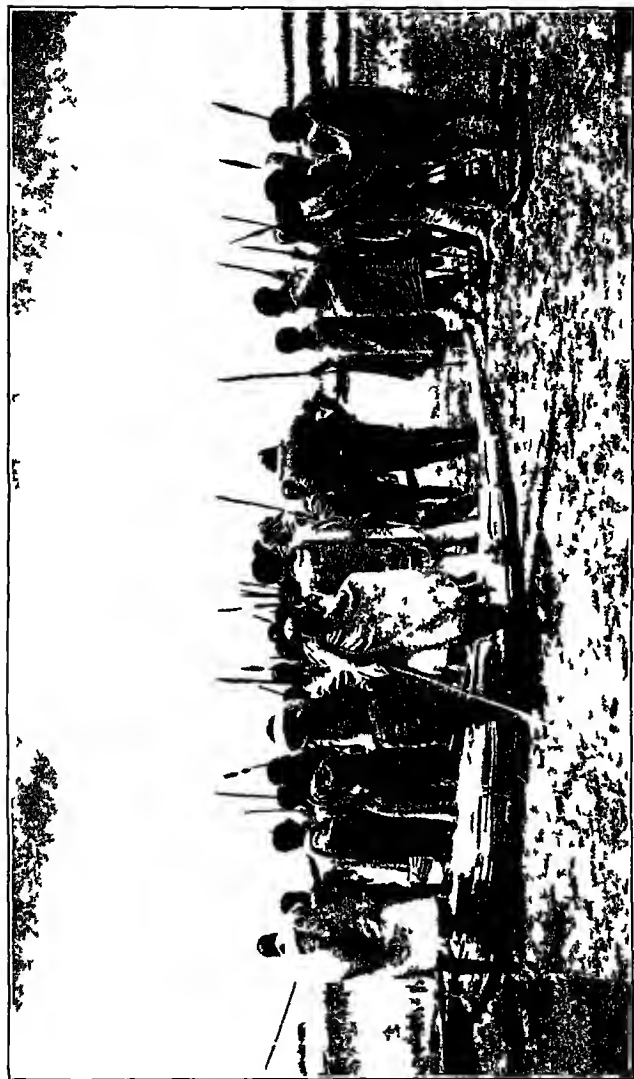
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where and we did not greatly care. For all we knew, it might have struck some other Hawash ford, four hours distant, as that positive rider had said. We trusted to Jim to bring it along somehow, some time.

We were satisfied that it was daylight. We collected our bedraggled belongings and rode forth in the rain, our minds focused only upon food. In some mysterious manner I lost my pistol holster under that dismal fig-tree. I had been carrying my luger automatic in my hand, in case some night beast should venture too near; and in the morning, while I still had my pistol, the holster was gone utterly. Search among the fat wet leaves revealed only fatter and wetter leaves. I couldn't remember having at any time taken it off my belt; nor was there any reason for doing so. I don't know to this day what could have become of it.

My lady accused me of having put a dastardly trick over on her in the darkness. She insisted that I had crept out of hearing and had eaten it without offering a share. But that was really not so.

Instinct of the famishing led us in the right direction. We came upon a Galla village where a hospitable chiefling, in exchange for cartridges—Savage .30 that didn't fit any gun in the whole land—gave us breakfast. *Injera*, clammy pancakes of sour dough; *shimbura*, roasted gram, the same that he fed to our mules; coffee with salt in it instead of sugar; and milk, smoke cured and awful, but whitish liquid with nourishment in it. We engulfed too much of all of it—and found within a few hours that our stomachs were not as hardened as a Galla's to digesting that kind of



LAKI SPARMEN ALL UNSUSPICIOUS OF THE CAMERA'S EVIL EYE



GAILA WOMEN



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fodder. It was small comfort to know that a most excellent selection of the Stoddard company's anti-spasmodic medicines were in a leather case with the caravan somewhere in the bush behind us.

From the Galla *shoum* we borrowed a guide, and a horse for our faithful mission boy, and lost no time in fording the Hawash. Just in time. It was up to our saddle seats—which were thoroughly wet anyway. And then we made a long steady trek to the nearest section of the railroad.

A thin sun broke through the rain with advancing morning; and immediately we rode with bent heads, as through a hail-storm; through swarms, droves, clouds of flying termites that had dug up through the softened earth. Fat-bodied, soft, helpless things they were, that fluttered aimlessly, without sense of direction, and blundered into whatever obstruction happened to be in their direct path.

Perhaps entomologists know why the things swarm in their sudden billions and what might be the size of the caverns that contain their masses underground in preparation for the outbreak. In the obscure life cycle of most insects, I believe, flight is nature's brief arrangement for the sole purpose of facilitating mating. In which case it is a dispensation of Providence that the period of flight for these termite swarms is so brief. Their fragile wings drop off upon the slightest impact; often for no apparent reason in mid-flight. Many millions of them emerge from their holes and shed their wings with the first stretch; so that every

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hole in the wet ground is surrounded for a yard or more with a thick carpet of brownish-yellow satin sheen.

For all of which, Providence be thanked. For it is these termites, the "white ants" of colloquial parlance, that eat away posts, the underpinnings of houses, anything that is buried in the ground, or lies on the ground—such as a tent floor cloth or the bottom of a duffle bag.

I don't know whether birds and the smaller mammals thank Providence. As an infant I was brought up on the pretty fiction that a hen, when it lifted up its head to let its beakful of water run down its gullet, was giving thanks to a bountiful heaven. I have since then cogitated upon how much greater must be the thanks rendered by a pelican when it throws its head high and shuts its eyes as it swallows its shovelful of fish. And I have wondered again in what manner do the creatures of the wild give thanks for the sporadic outbreaks of flying ants. Perhaps by sitting around too fatly gorged to move from a mule's path.

All the birds and lesser mammals of Abyssinia gathered that morning as to a millennium. The lion of bird life lay down with the lamb and there was peace between them. From sparrows and painted finches up to hawks and even fish eagles, they scrambled to the overflowing feast without enmity and utterly without dignity.

Vultures, unfitted for anything but the tearing up of lumps of meat, scooped up the crawling pulpy morsels with an ungainly sideways motion. Snowy egrets

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stabbed at them with piston speed and precision. A great adjutant straddled over a hole and thrust his pick-ax beak deep into it to suck the helpless things in as they struggled upward. His method must have been good; for his bald crop was bloated and red lined with distended veins.

Big black geese and tiny little teal-like ducks, properly equipped by nature for just such work, gorged themselves so that they sat sluggishly, as though wounded to the death, all over the open landscape. Fat brown partridges crouched by the trail side and refused to move. Snaky-necked cormorants—well, cormorants can eat anything, anywhere, at any time, and in any quantity. Mice, wood rats, and larger furry shapes scuttled greedily about the brush.

And we were too wet and cold and miserable—and stomach cramped—to think about shooting a thing for supper. Then the sun came out stronger and we felt better, and energy and ambition began to return to us. And then everything disappeared with the same stage illusion swiftness with which it had appeared. Gone were the ant clouds. Gone the furry creatures and the geese and the ducks and the partridges. Only the vultures, that nobody and nothing else eats, sat heavily gorged on the low hanging tree limbs; and the ground was specked for miles around with frail, shiny, velvety wings.

We rode once more through dreary, desolate thorn bush. Though not as desiccate dead as when we had come out. Just those few nights of rain had been sufficient to wake the brute scrub to life. Tiny specks of

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green were bursting from every brown nodule on the twisted branches, and the thorns seemed to have polished their points and were sharper. Wait-a-bit trailers had grown whole feet longer, and they clung lovingly to us and begged us to stay, now that their joyous spring had come.

But we remained strong hearted to the blandishments of the bush in the rain time. We wanted railway trains and clothes and comfort. We found the first that same evening, and we took the first train—two days later—to home with all its comforts for the travel-worn and weary. That is to say, to the insanitary French hotel in Addis Abeba.

Jim brought the caravan in a couple of days behind us. It turned out that he too had come in the course of time to that place of the parting of the ways. He too had a right sense of direction; but he traveled under the handicap of nagadis. They ringed him round and shouted him down, holding stanchly by the dictum of that idiot of their own race; and one of them clinched the argument by swearing boldly that he had been there before and he knew the way.

So they had all trailed off to their right to that unlikely looking break in the hills; and that false break but led on to another rise; and it was not until they had topped that that they saw in the impossible distance the unmistakable curve of the Hawash River Valley. Being nagadis, they would have lain down and camped there, leaving Frangi Bwana and his lady to make out as best they might for the night.

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But Jim had driven them with fist and foot and gun in a desperate attempt to cut across bush and over hill and ravine to reach the ford where he knew we must be. It was only when black darkness came upon the caravan, and with it the opportunity for the nagadis to "lose" three of the pack mules somewhere behind in the night, that Jim had been forced to make camp. Too far, miles and miles too far, of course, for us to hear any shot signals.

The only ray of sunshine that can be got out of the whole episode is that three of the nagadis' mules died on the same day that they reached home, thereby cutting down their profits to a figure less exorbitant than they had hoped. One's compassion for the poor mules is lessened by the consideration that nagadis' mules are much happier dead anyhow.

CHAPTER XII

SERIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

A SOJOURN in Addis Abeba, capital city of Abyssinia, while the "little monsoon" rains daily and with violence upon the few just travelers, as well as upon the many unjust residents, seems at first sight to be one of those propositions that has sunk below the ultimate zero. The condition is one that seems to be the inevitable fate of small and much-mixed white colonies in alien lands all the world over. The component nationalities are not cohesive enough to combine and organize amusements or interests to tide over the dreary days; and in themselves the groups are too small to do anything much.

A total lack of any get-together spirit prevails. The foreign legations form nuclei round which groups of their nationals hover in more or less formal relationship, with an exchange of calls, luncheons, and dinners, each quite strictly tape-bound by the social conventions current among the different nationalities.

In order to forestall a swift denial of cramping conventions by some hundred per center, I lay em-

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phasis upon the qualifying phrase "current among different nationalities." The ineradicable officialdom of the French legation, for instance, is stiff in comparison with the cordial hospitality of the British, which in turn, however, would strike, say, a western American, as formal.

The condition is distinctly more pronounced in Addis Abeba than in almost any other foreign capital—due, probably, to the difficulty found by the European in meeting the native upon any common basis of understanding. In European cities alien exiles merge more easily with people of their own color and mode of thought and do not form isolated groups. Constantinople, perhaps, offers the closest parallel to Addis Abeba.

It is a condition unfortunate for the possibilities of relaxation of the domiciled exiles, and unfortunate, therefore, for their contentment and happiness. For I submit it as tenable theory that the vast majority of individuals are contented, or otherwise, in their state of life according to their pleasures and not according to their labors therein. One's work is the curse of Adam that must be faced for eight hours or more of everybody's day, and it doesn't make very much difference what the outlook from the office windows may be. It is the relaxation or the amusement after the day's labor that determines whether one may look forward to that day with pleasure.

In proof of which I think I may venture to say without a single vote of contradiction that there does not exist in Addis Abeba a European or American

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who would not a million times rather be almost anywhere else.

Amusements in Addis Abeba are, to say the least, meager and lean of their kind. During the dry weather there is tennis for the young and strenuous ones whose lungs can cope with the eight thousand foot elevation; and tea and cake for the doddering old folks in their thirties who find the altitude more conducive to rest; and—since there are some half-dozen British in the town—there is, of course, a delightful and amazingly well-administered race-course.

During the rainy season there is nothing. Blank, absolute, stark nothing. Tennis is six inches under water, and the race-course belly-deep in *chicka*. Tea—well, since the six faithful British are still there, tea persists; but it is hardly a sport affording exhilaration sufficient to take the place of almost everything else that civilized man ever enjoyed or found necessary to his well being.

The exile in Addis must wipe out his furthest yearning for swimming, boating, games, golf—even cricket. He must forget music, drama, lectures, almost even books; for the only circulating library is founded by an East Indian patriot so fierce that it is restricted to the use of his own people.

There is a cinema; in fact, two cinemas. One furnishes every Sunday night a dimly lit program of films that were banished from Paris fifteen years ago. Who doesn't remember the decrepit comedy in which the athletic landlady chases the defaulting lodgers over roofs, through trap-doors, and among telephone

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wires? Well, we saw that one as the feature film; with part seven of an aged French serial as a follow-up. Viewing French films, one is impelled to demand why it is that none of the vaunted French beauties ever "go into the movies."

The other cinema functions occasionally in combination with a program of song and hoochy-coochy supplied by Greek artists, and a concluding "family dance" which quite intriguingly often ends up in a stick and bottle fight—though not with sufficient regularity to be regarded as a standard amusement of the town.

Those who have taken up the white man's burden, therefore—if such a term can be applied to free and independent Ethiopia—are not ebulliently contented with their lot.

Yet amusements—or let me say, rather, interests—are to be found in Addis Abeba, even during the rains, if one sets out to look for them.

The people themselves, of course, offer a fascinating subject for any frowsy foggy—such as a would-be observant traveler—who cares to make a study of a people who have their unique points of interest in the world's history.

The fact that they are the only people in all known history who have never been conquered by anybody else—and in Africa, at that—is worthy of more than a passing thought. That they were a Christian people when Rome was at the mercy of heathen hordes, and that they possess ancient documents of vital bearing upon the early Christian church, offers a field of absorbing research that will some day, and soon, be

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eagerly grasped at by the collegeful of earnest archaeologists. That they stand alone, the only portion of free Africa left, and, at that, quite the potentially richest, as well as blessed with a white man's climate, and are bordered on at least two sides by European nations owning not such potentially rich territory, opens up a problem that already has and will continue to have interest for serious students of world politics.

A jumbled mass of material this, that is worthy of many years and many books. What high-lights can one pick out of the confusion that can be dealt with as interests sufficient to themselves?

Just who these people are must be the first consideration—even if one only hovers around the elementary edge of amateur ethnology. The answer is fortunately quite easy. Nobody knows. Various theories have been put forward to account for their origin. Egyptian, Sabian, Hamitic, Arabian, each with its partizan upholders and with its plausible conjectures; and the whole comprises an appalling amount of reading.

Where to begin? How to condense? One is astonished at the amount of literature that exists about a country of which one knew nothing at all a few months ago and about which not very much is known by anybody, in spite of all the wordage.

It seems, broadly speaking, that there have been three periods of world interest in the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, between which periods it has sunk into the voluntary seclusion and obscurity from which it is now awakening.

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The first period was in the fourth century, when the church of Alexandria was at daggers drawn, literally, with the church of Constantinople, and the Monophysites and Jacobites on the one side and the Nestorians on the other were still murdering each other over the question of the single or the dual nature of their Saviour. It was then that Frumentius scored a notable gain for the church of Alexandria by coming and converting the people of Ethiopia to his faith and dogma, a gain that has lasted through the centuries; for the *abuna*, the archbishop of the Ethiopian church, is still imported from the now Coptic church of Alexandria.

The second period was in the sixteenth century, when Portugal, then at the height of her power, sent Jesuit priests to convert the Ethiopian church to the militant Catholicism of the time, with the threat in the background—conveyed by Cristoforo da Gama and Father Bermudez—that refusal would result in excommunication of the whole Ethiopian race. A decade or so of wrangling resulted in the Ethiopian church solemnly declaring the Pope to be a heretic, expelling the Jesuit mission, and settling back, strong and serene, under the domination of the Patriarch of Alexandria.

The third period was in 1896, when the Italians made their misguided attempt to annex the country, and the Emperor Menelek, that great man of Abyssinia, brought defeat upon them at Adowa, capturing some ten thousand prisoners and exacting a war indemnity.

This from an African people upon a European

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power turned the eyes of all Europe upon Abyssinia, and floods of informative books by wise professors, and ponderous articles by military experts burst forth. Abyssinia had suddenly become a factor in modern European politics.

Who were these Abyssinian people living in Africa, the rest of which had already been partitioned off? What was their race? What stock had been able to do this thing?

One school traced them back to be Egyptians overlaid by Hamitic and Semitic invasions before the Christian period. Backing up their theory were the persisting strong traces of the characteristic features of all three peoples, and the existence in the northern part of the country of colonies of Jews known as the Falasha, who until recently had lost all contact with, and even memory of, the rest of their people, yet retained in all their purity most of the forms and ceremonies of Semitic worship.

Another school connected the Ethiopian religious history of the Queen of Sheba with "Saba," Sabian stock brought by the Himyaritic Arabs. This school bolstered its argument with undoubted Sabian inscriptions in the boustrophedon style—*i.e.*, from left to right, then right to left with characters reversed—which had been found upon monoliths in the district of Axum.

Quite as well founded as any is the theory expounded to me and well upheld by Dr. Hannahbey Salib, an Egyptian scholar who has spent twenty-five years in Abyssinia and has amassed during that period an

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enormous store of knowledge about the people and their country.

This truly learned man contends that the original stock of the Amharic Abyssinian is Caucasian. In order that this distinction, Amharic, may be understood, it is necessary to explain that more than two thirds of the people living in Abyssinia to-day who are loosely spoken of as Abyssinians consist of conquered tribes of Hamitic and Negritic stock; Gallas, in whose case let us say, perhaps, have conquered; Shankallas, Danakils, Somalis, Gouragis, and a host of subsidiaries. These semi-savage people are dominated by a less than one third per cent. of the Amharic-speaking ruling race, the true Abyssinians—or, as they prefer to call themselves, Ethiopians.

Dr. Hannahbey's theory is that a pre-Mosaic wave of Caucasian immigration penetrated southward as far as Himyar in the northern part of Arabia, settled there temporarily, and then, feeling the hereditary urge for a mountainous country, continued southward through Yemen and thence crossed over to the Ethiopian highlands, bringing with them the name Amharic, being an obvious corruption of Himyara, the people from Himyar.

To support this theory that the stock was not a mere branch of the Himyarites, he produces, among others, a salient and very interesting fact which seems to have been overlooked by other investigators—namely, that the ancient Geez language, which is still the priestly tongue of the Abyssinian church, contains so many letters identical with the Armenian that an

Armenian can almost read, though he may not understand a word of, Geez. He goes on to show that the Geez language retains the Caucasian form of placing the adjective before the noun, as "a big house"; while the Arabic says, "a house big."

If this philologic argument, and it is a strong one, can be accepted, then the various Arabic influences put forward by those who hold to the theory of Himyaritic descent can easily be explained by the sojourn of the Caucasian immigrants in that country. Later Egyptian and Semitic influences are, of course, admitted by all.

In talking of Abyssinians, then, one refers to the Amharic-speaking ruling race—the people who now prefer to be known officially by their ancient name of Ethiopians, since the word "Abyssinian" is a corruption of the contemptuous Arabic term *habesha*, meaning a nondescript mixture.

In writing of the Amharas I find that my position must be one of defense. Of recent writers, most have attacked them bitterly, and articles which appear in the European press from time to time show a tendency to dwell upon the unpleasant experiences rather than the pleasant, and to denounce the people with according venom. European residents almost universally agree with the denounciators.

It would be a most fascinating study in the psychology of cause and effect if some omniscient force might enable one to dissect the intimate history and associations of these detractors and to connect the reason with the resultant opinion. To a certain extent this can

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be done, inasmuch as the hostiles fall into certain well-defined groups of common interests and modes of thought.

My own experience of the Amharas has been so different from that of the majority that I am compelled to agree with Mr. C. F. Rey, the one outstanding authority favorable to Abyssinia, and to try and find an explanation of this uncomplimentary attitude.

I have commented with equal—I hope, in fact, with much greater—uncomplimentariness upon the monkey stupidity of the “African” boy and on the brute offensiveness of the nagadi anthropoid. Let it be clearly understood that these are Africans—Shankallas, Gouragis, etc., of the servant class, with a corresponding mentality; very far removed indeed from the Amharas of the ruling race.

In all my dealings with the Amhara I have found him to be kindly and courteous, with a sense of his own dignity equal to that which he is prepared to recognize in the foreigner whose actions deserve it. The explanation of the great gulf of difference between the opinions of Mr. Rey and myself, and of the prevailing majority, lies of course in the point of view and in the expectations.

The oftenest proclaimed and loudest voiced complaint made by Europeans against Abyssinians is that they are offensive. In what way offensive? the stranger asks; and the charge is that they are independent and insolent and unprincipled and lacking in respect, and so forth. All of which really boils down to the simple circumstance that the common people in the streets

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and in the bazaars do not show particular preference for the European.

This is doubtless a source of irritation to the Europeans belonging to nations that have large colonies in Africa, and who have grown up in the tradition of the subservient native. But it is hardly a just charge to bring against a free citizen in his own country who throughout the world's history has never had occasion to concede any sort of superiority to the white man on the score of his color alone.

Let some of these dissatisfied ones go to Haiti, where the colored citizen on his own soil exhibits an active hostility to white superiority, and they would find real cause for complaint. Unfortunately for harmony, it cannot be said that conditions between native Ethiopian and white foreigner are improving.

"In the time of Menelek," it is always quoted, "Frangis"—a corruption of the more familiar "Feringhee"—were treated with special respect just because they were white. Quite true. True, also, that the class of white man who came into the country at that time deserved it.

In more recent years certain of the lesser races of Europe, among whom are some of the slickest traders in the world, have come into the country in great numbers. While some of these people have built up for themselves respected positions in business, it is immeasurably to be regretted that the majority of them have taken, as ducks to water, to living in mud and wattle houses, unclean as to their clothing, foul as to their habits; while they exercise their shrewder

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intelligences and their years of hereditary sharp trading to cheat the native in every way that they can devise in circumvention of the law.

To the Ethiopian these people are European just as much as are the members of the legations, and white prestige has suffered accordingly. The Frangi is no longer looked upon, *per se*, as a gentleman of integrity. He must first prove his worth.

But that evil is bringing its own remedy. The Ethiopian in the cities is beginning to recognize that there does exist a difference between Europeans and Europeans, and these other people are being called Frangi Gouragis: Gouragis being a tribe much looked down upon as being unwashed savages, eaters of offal, and willing to stoop to the most menial labor.

The foregoing perhaps explains the dissatisfaction of quite the largest group of hostiles. Another group consists of the unsuccessful business men. Their explanation is easy. They have come to get something out of the country. In some cases they have spent money in the country, hoping to take more out. And they have failed. This group quite naturally excuses its non-success by assailing everything Abyssinian. The law as it exists, the lack of the law as they would like it to be, the crookedness of judges, the business ethics of the whole nation, the slackness of justice which permits those other Europeans, the Frangi Gouragis, to operate, against whom no regular white man can compete, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Perhaps there is more truth, too, in their complaint; for Abyssinia is as far from perfection as are some

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of those European countries themselves. The manners, the customs, the morals are not the same as are those of the most advanced peoples of Europe—no more than the manners of some of those other Europeans are the manners of the court of St. James. They are the ways of a long-isolated country struggling only just now to emerge into the community of nations.

Might it not be a pertinent question to put to those disgruntled ones: why did they choose to come to seek their fortunes in an undeveloped country? Obviously, because they thought their chances of success would be better where competition with keener intelligences would be less acute. Is it quite fair, then, to expect better chances without putting up with some of the disadvantages?

Yet another group of detractors is small; so small as hardly to be called a group; and not nearly so obvious as the others. But, in converse ratio, their defamation goes far beyond the general grumblings of the merely dissatisfied ones.

It is of set purpose and sinister. These are the political propagandists.

There are many residents in Addis Abeba who will snort in loud scorn at the very suggestion that such a group exists. I might even concede that they may be right; for I have no proof that any organized propaganda bureaus do exist. That they do is current talk; that some of the more virulent attacks in certain European newspapers seem to be more than mere accident is noteworthy. But that is all tea-table talk, bazaar gossip. One cannot help wondering whether

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the insistence of all this smoke does not denote at least a certain amount of fire. But nobody can quote bazaar chatter as even circumstantial evidence.

Let us assume that no professional propagandists exist. Yet there certainly exist a host of amateurs. The most dangerous ones are innocent earnest people filled with a righteous conviction that their individual country ought to intervene to alter conditions to approximate more closely what they think they should be.

These are the people who wield pens that may well be precursors of the sword. They write books and articles—not always accurately informed—to their patriot newspapers at home. At all events, whatever their motives, whether they burn with honest indignation or whether they play a deep and crafty game, the fact is patent that books and articles—in more than one European language—reiterating the burden of “How long, O Lord, how long?” have appeared and continue to appear. It is also incontrovertible fact that, upon their appearance, jingo patriots rise up in their various national assemblies and demand to know what their governments are going to do about it.

Very naturally, there exists, and is growing, an inevitable reaction in Ethiopia to this continuous fault-finding, and particularly to the printed utterance. Old residents—those who bemoan their prestige in the time of Menelek—maintain that they detect a distinct and increasing hostility on the part of the native against the European; and they add unconsciously always the burden of the articles and books.

“God knows how it is all going to end. This country

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is getting to be more difficult to live in every year."

As why, in the name of all reason and common sense, should it not be so? Fault-finding breeds fault-finding just as surely as respect breeds respect; dislike harvests hate as inevitably as friendliness ripens amity.

Abyssinia is a difficult country for the European to live in. And for the single and unequivocal reason that the European finds it difficult to the point of impossibility to lay aside his inborn conviction that he is the dominant white man and to accept the absurd grotesquerie that in Ethiopia he is not the superior of the free and independent Ethiopian.

I have spoken in all the foregoing of "Europeans" and have viewed conditions as European problems. This not because Americans are above censure, but because the white man in all conversation in Abyssinia is invariably spoken of as European. Americans, as a distinct people, have been so few and have figured so slightly in either creating or meeting the existing difficulties that the problems can hardly be applied in their case. I, myself, for instance, an American, sojourning in the land only to look and to observe and to ask the foolish questions that travelers ask, have found no difficulties of living, no unpleasantness to cope with; only a most flattering desire to be friendly. There have not been enough of us to spoil things for ourselves—as yet.

We have done our bit. Possibly, *pro rata* of population, more than our bit. An American journalist, who ought to have known very much better, visited Addis Abeba not so many years ago, and, being one of the

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first from our own country, whom the ruler wished to honor, was treated with the utmost official hospitality. After which he went home and displayed the bad taste of ridiculing that very hospitality, and of commenting in most uncomplimentary terms upon the personality of the empress.

It was inevitable that his conduct should be described as American shirt-sleeve manners.

Another trained newspaper man, not so long ago either, obtained an official interview with the prince regent on an international issue, and went home and misquoted him with an inaccuracy that was astounding even in a reporter.

The result is that the ruler of the country, as well as all his chief ministers, are distinctly "off of" American journalists.

We have had, in addition, a troublesome prospector or two who have since vented their spleen in print; and a couple of notable alcoholics whose brawls sent their Greek hotel-keeper forth into the night to seek help and to cry murder.

Yes, by all means, we Americans have done our share to discredit ourselves.

But fortunately, our national misdeeds are all overlaid, almost buried, in fact—though the memory of those journalists sticks—by the splendid work that is being carried on by a small group of devoted Americans. The United Presbyterian Mission has built a fine modern hospital in the outskirts of the city, where a staff of American surgeons and nurses carry on a labor arduous enough under any circumstances, and here,

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under difficulties inconceivable to us in our modern—and, in comparison, model—cities of America.

The situation is a delightful one. American donations supplied the necessary money, and Algaurash Tafari Makonnen, the prince regent, who was immediately interested in the work, gave a great square of ground grown over with tall, scented eucalyptus-trees. The unremitting care of the mission staff has created a garden spot out of it, in the midst of which the gray stone buildings lose much of the cold grimness that is usually associated with hospitals.

From the far entrance gate the whole looks like a wealthy and well-founded enterprise. But hospitals cost a staggering amount of money to run. The medicine and bandage bill alone would be more than a pleasant income for many a wretched traveler person who goes home to write books. And missions have an unbelievable number of calls upon their funds—other hospitals in Egypt, for example.

Now Addis Abeba is a town without municipal electric plant and water-works. Think, then, ye sheltered citizens, in these days of the paramount X-ray diagnosis, of major emergency operations being carried to successful issue by the illumination of oil lamps.

I cite a case taken at random, one of the everyday occurrences. A Somali was brought in with his head broken in several places as the result of a fight with six other Somalis. The chief surgeon immediately operated, while another held the kerosene lamp in the most favorable position and hoped to all goodness that the ether fumes wouldn't suddenly take fire and go off

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with a bang; and a nurse passed the instruments. The operation was successful. The man recovered—and stole the sheets off his bed the night that he climbed out of a window and disappeared.

Having had experience of Somalis in their own very unpleasant home grounds and having been compelled by evil fate to deal with them, I myself totally disagree with Christian charity extended to Somalis.

Consider, again, you American millions who just turn faucets and let pure reservoir water go to waste down the sink till it runs cool in Summer; think of all the manifold and enormous water requirements of a hospital having to be pumped by hand out of a hundred-and-ten-foot well. Day and night must relays of Gouragi coolies labor at this well; and even so, the supply is often insufficient. And when it is necessary for some one to go down on the end of a rope to scoop out the frogs and things and to attend to one or other of the interminable fixings of the pump apparatus, is it a Gouragi coolie who goes, or perhaps some sturdy native convalescent who suns himself on the porch after having been haled from the valley of death? It is not. It is one of the mission staff, who might be better employed in a sick ward.

But a private electric plant would cost five thousand dollars to install; and to pipe in a water supply from the distant hills would cost at least two thousand. So the mission toils on in faith and hope and charity.

For the sake of this hospital it is that the rest of us few Americans who visit Abyssinia reap the reward in the respect and friendliness of the Ethiopian people.

CHAPTER XIII

WITCHCRAFT AND WEREWOLVES

SOLEMN and controversial things have been said. Much contumely will descend upon my head. But such is the inevitable lot of all fearless expeditionists who have the temerity to draw upon the very important rope of print to record their hasty observations.

Let us speedily turn to matters of greater interest. The unearthing, for instance, of witchcraft. Literally unearthing; for witch doctors are frowned upon by the church, and the church has much to say in Christian Ethiopia.

One of the most readily discoverable—though it has been put down by the law—is thief-hunting through the agency of a *lebasha*. This is a variation of the West African *obeah*, and, like the *obeah* man's boy with a pot, the astounding thing about a *lebasha's* performance is that he runs the culprit to earth in a larger percentage of times than can be explained away by coincidence.

A *lebasha* is always a boy some ten or twelve years old whose first and inexorable requirement is that he must be a virgin youth—so there are not very many

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of them in the country. Another requirement seems to be that he must be thin and anemic and of a highly strung, nervous temperament—or, in Greenwich Village terms, psychic. There is a restless look in the eyes of a *lebasha* and he is fidgety in his movements. He is distinctly a subnormal; so that, instead of being able to look after himself and reap the quite handsome profit of his art—or craft—he is exploited, or owned by, the astute individual of sinister bearing who has the reputation of being a wizard.

A theft is committed somewhere. There are two courses open to the bereaved one. One is to call in the police, who in Addis Abeba are quite up to the most modern police methods, even as in New York city.

They will look mysterious and aloof and all swollen up with wisdom; they will exclude everybody from the premises and will walk all over it with eyes of eagle observation; they will appropriate everything contained in the premises for examination; then they will arrest everybody in sight and twist their tails quite as efficiently as any of our third-degree artists, in the hope that somebody will squeal. There will be endless runnings to the police station and tedious appearances before magistrates to identify articles that have not been lost and people whom one does not know; and it can all continue as long as the loser may have persistence enough to insist that the authorities find his goods. All very nice and homelike.

The other course—and who shall say it is not the wiser—is to call in a wizard who owns a *lebasha*. This man will come promptly to the spot where the stolen

article was last seen. He will start in exactly like an American detective. He will look mysterious and aloof and all swollen up with wisdom; he will exclude everybody from the premises and will walk all over it with eyes of eagle observation. But after that his methods will depart from the modernly scientific. They will partake, rather, of the day of *Uncle Tom* and the bloodhounds. He will give his *lebasha* a drink of some potent magic out of a gourd and will sick him on the trail.

The *lebasha* will squat for a while in a corner and will huddle in his blanket. Presently he will begin to moan and his limbs will twitch. His eyes will turn up in his head as though in ecstasy of pain and he will pass into a deathlike coma. It is now that his spirit will leave him and the all-seeing spirit of wizardry will enter into him. This new spirit, as soon as it is well established, will announce its presence with a yell. The *lebasha* will leap to his feet, full of vim and eagerness, and will commence sniffing round at objects and people and on the floor. Then, like a hound, with head low and eyes fixed, he will run off on the scent and will so continue at a dog-trot over hill and dale and all obstacles, with certain notable exceptions.

The theory of these exceptions would be tremendously interesting to trace out and to compare with mediæval European witchcraft; but, alas! there is no literature of wizardry in Abyssinia, and the owners of *lebashas* know no more than that the exceptions exist.

If the thief, before disposing of his loot, has crossed running water—note the analogy to the hound—the

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lebasha will sit down upon the brink and will moan dismally, and the trail will be lost.

Or, if the thief has taken the precaution to carry any article of iron or steel bent in the shape of a half moon, the trail will be similarly bent and will return to the starting point. There is surely a trace here of the lucky horseshoe, and another of the old English belief in cold iron as a warder off of witchcraft.

Failing these antidotes to his spell, the *lebasha* will continue tirelessly over a period of several days until he will arrive, finally, either at the place where the stolen article is, or at the person who has stolen it.

The astonishing thing about this smelling out process is that it is vouched for by hundreds of intelligent native Ethiopians as having recovered their own stolen property for them. Persistent inquiry over a period of months, making every reasonable allowance for exaggerations and for plain lies, impels one to accept the tale of at least 50 per cent. of recoveries.— Which seems to be another deviation from modern police methods.

The weak spot in this admirable system is the tendency to run to earth the person in lieu of the goods. For quite frequently the unfortunate person might not have the goods with him; and in that case the smelling out is apt to be accepted as final evidence; just as it used to be in the good old days of our forefathers when they went witch-hunting with the full determination in advance that they were going to get a witch. Smellees have been known to get quite as unprejudiced a deal as the witch did.

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So Algaurash Tafari Makonnen, the prince regent, has legislated the *lebashes* out of official existence. Before that enactment nearly every police station, recognizing the superior system, maintained a stealthy arrangement with a good *lebasha* hejder.

Fortune-tellers, of course, flourish. Since they are harmless advisers in the everyday affairs of business and love and marriage; or, in fact, the propitious time for any undertaking. The law does not trouble them. But the church regards them considerably sideways; for it is no different from most churches in believing that the right person to go to for almost any kind of advice is the priest.

These soothsayers are nearly always old Galla women, who ply the usual hokum of shells and colored beads and bits of carved bone, and deal in vague generalities which can be twisted to fit the subsequent event often enough to sustain their reputations.

But now and then one comes across a more elaborate artist who insists upon the expense of killing a sheep in order to examine its intestines. Since a sheep costs all of a dollar and a quarter, these extravagant seers don't do nearly as much business as the shell- and bone-casters. But, on the other hand, they seem to be very much more revered for accurate prognostication—as witness the witch woman who prophesied to the hermit farmer of Lake Zwai that two white men and a white woman were coming to visit him.

Their actual method of reading the omens naturally remains their own secret; but close observation reveals an interesting insight into the elements of their prac-

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tice. A sheep's stomach is covered with a network of nerves of fatty tissue. The seer seems to select certain of the nuclei or ganglia, or whatever they may be, to represent the client's person, his house, his influences, and so on; and then the wanderings of the veinous tissues show the roads that lie before him.

A quite extraordinary tale is told, and vouched for by Europeans, about an old lady who lived an hour's journey from one of the caravan routes and who exhibited an entirely novel and pleasing variation of the art. She solicited no business and would receive no callers. But from time to time she would issue a command to some traveler to come to her hut. The traveler who would not respond to her summons would be foolish indeed; for his animals would surely sicken and die.

The wise traveler, however, who forsook the trail and went with speed would be received by slaves, conducted within the thorn-inclosed compound, and entertained with milk and *injera* bread. The wise woman herself would never appear; but after a while a slave would come out from the central wattle-and-daub hut bringing—this is the part that strains credulity—a present of money for the traveler and a message foretelling the events and the outcome of his journey.

Of course, such a thing was too good to last. The wise woman, it seems, was unwise enough to dabble in revolutionary politics. Just what her offense was seems to be uncertain. But the Government sent a squad of soldiers to arrest her and bring her in. The story is then universally believed that the soldiers were re-

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strained by some invisible force from entering her thorn *boma*. Paralysis took their limbs as they tried to pass the gate. They came back without her, and nobody could be found who was willing to go out and try to arrest her again. Then, extraordinary woman that she was, she came in voluntarily and submitted herself to confinement; and there she still remains.

Who in these days believes in love potions? Nobody? I imagine, though, that those farther away travelers who know Africa or the Orient or the Pacific—or any place where skins are dark and the sun is warm—will all agree that they have seen some mighty queer cases; though they may not have delved into the witchery of them.

In Abyssinia the method is quite metaphysically scientific. The would-be vamp must obtain from a witch woman a few pinches of certain herbs and the customary dried and pulverized offal. To these she must add a drop or two of her own blood and some personal portion of her prey—hair or finger-nails or something. The function of the magic herbs is to bring the astral vibrations of the personal portions of herself into accord with those of the personal portions of the chosen man.

But that is not all. Thereafter the two women must work together. . . . Why is it, incidentally, that only women deal in and avail themselves of this particular kind of magic? For three days the vamp must carry her bag of dried relics upon her person; best of all, between her breasts. This is a matter of personal

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preparation. Then for nine days, at exactly the same time—that is to say, at the same period of the sun and earth vibration—she must visit the witch woman, and together they must concentrate upon bringing her own bodily vibrations into tune with the nucleus that has been formed by the junction of the portion of herself with the portion of the desired man. During this novena of concentration a thought force is being formed round the nucleus. Advanced stuff, isn't it?

At the end of the nine days the man must be induced to take into himself this nucleus of attuned vibration with its attendant thought force. He must be invited to dinner or to afternoon coffee, or his liquor vender must be bribed. In a country where mice fall into the great earthen beer-pots a bolus of dried relic is easy to administer.

Thereafter for twenty-seven more days—note the three and the nine and the twenty-seven—the two women, still at the same exact period of earth and sun vibrations, must concentrate upon helping their essence of vibration and thought force which the man has taken into himself to bring his physcial vibration into accord with itself. Which will mean, of course, that the man's whole being will vibrate in complete harmony with the woman's. And what better slave to a designing vamp could there ever be than a man whose vibrations are attuned to hers?

And if the man does not fall, it means only that the plotters have not concentrated hard enough, or that he is lucky enough to possess a particularly robust and one-track constitution. Such men, it seems, are few;

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for failures—if the business has been conducted right—are almost nil.

Let the scientific skeptic scoff his lungs sore. Brothers of the far trail will back me up. These queer things happen. And to their experience and my own I add one more instance.

Right in Addis Abeba I knew personally and intimately a strong white man who was insanely under the spell of a half-breed woman of the worst possible character. She deceived him openly and blatantly, and he, as well as the rest of the world, knew it. He lost position and friends on her account. He knew her to be unclean. And yet, in spite of all, he wanted—probably still wants—to marry her. Let the stay-at-home skeptic scoff that tragedy away.

I have considered ways and means of signing up a syndicate and importing a good witch woman into one of our motion-picture colonies where wise young vamps and volatile young millionaires flourish.

Werewolves are known in Abyssinia. Though there they are were-hyenas. I have seen none myself and can report only the native stories about them. Which don't amount to much anyway. Useless sort of creatures, they seem to be, who have no proper function in the world of witchcraft. They are supposed to be old men or women who know of incantations and potent herbs which give them power of turning themselves into hyenas. Having accomplished which feat, theirs is the reward of being able to go out and dig up corpses for a midnight repast along with other hyenas

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and jackals; and sometimes they may snatch up somebody's child; though, unlike werewolves, they don't seem to be able to acquire any new lease of life from the youthful victim. The only thing interesting about them is the analogy in their connection with the werewolf and vampire lore of mediæval Europe, in that the charm against them is garlic. A child well smeared with garlic may go forth on the darkest night without fear of molestation by the wildest were-hyenas. Which shows that the creatures are not without their finer sensibilities.

The malevolent sorcerers who cast the death-spell or who pray people to death are world-wide; and it has been pretty well established that their victims, provided that the superstition is strong within them and that they have knowledge of the spell, do die.

In Abyssinia it is claimed that an ancient wizardry that has come down from old Egypt enables its adepts to cast the death-spell *without* the knowledge of the victim. But what a lifetime of investigation it would require to furnish any sort of evidence about this! It is difficult enough to dig out anything about their dark methods; for these exponents of black magic are truculent by the very nature of their dealing. One must approach them with fear and trembling and with gifts, lest some inadvertent offense might call down the fatal spell upon one's self. And they are as cautious as badgers lest some stout young bereaved relative might suddenly light upon the theory that if he could swiftly shove a spear through the center of the

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necromancer he would eliminate the retaliative spell.

There seem to be three schools of recognized practice. The place of distinction must by all means be given to one which surely is a hang-over from the magic of Egypt. No rattling of bones or brewing of stench about this one. No hocus-pocus. The magician works on the ancient theory that when a man sleeps, his spirit floats above him attached only by a tenuous thread of astral matter, which exists as a cohesive cord only by reason of its individual vibration.

All he has to do, then, is to wait till his victim sleeps and then to project from himself—like the musical vibrations that have been known to shatter fragile glass—a counter-vibration powerful enough to disintegrate the vibration of the frail astral thread. And forthwith the spirit of life departs from the victim. No long-drawn-out illness here; no slow pining away. Smash! With one powerful spasm of concentrated thought the deed is done.

All these spells which work on the theory of physical vibrations are fascinatingly close to the ancient magic of the cult of Isis, Osiris, and Horus. Let the hard-boiled materialist scoff. As for me, I should have to know a very great deal more about the subject before I should venture to brand as a complete fake anything that has persisted through so many centuries.

These high Osirians are very expensive. A hundred silver dollars at least. But they are worth it; for their method has the outstanding merit of leaving absolutely no evidence.

The school which might hold second place adheres

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to the pure mediæval European one of making a waxen statue of the proposed victim and sticking it full of pins and things. But these practitioners have introduced one or two refinements which make their art more difficult.

They, too, are much intrigued with the theory of vibration. So they insist upon incorporating some portion of the victim into their statue, which, assisted by their thought force, will then develop the same wave length with him. And the wax must be beeswax; animal matter; for mineral or vegetable can never be made to vibrate in harmony with animal. The pins, too, must be animal matter; fish-bone or ivory; for steel—iron—would inevitably destroy the spell.

Another tantalizing glimpse, this, into the vague hang-overs from the occult past.

The third school is pure African voodoo grafted on to ancient lore. The theory is that certain animals can be charged with malignant forces and introduced into the proximity of the victim, who will then absorb the evil and so perish.

The practice has its difficulties. For the wizard must first catch a shrew-mouse in the house of his victim. If there is no mouse there, he must introduce one and give it time to absorb the atmosphere of that house—vibrations again, though these C-grade spell-binders don't know the word.

It must be a shrew-mouse, because they say that this smelly little beast was the first of all the animals that the Christian God made; and that by working through

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it one gets at the very roots of man's existence. This stirs a vague memory in my mind of having read somewhere or other that certain most uncomplimentary palaeontologists claim that some kind of ancestral shrew was the creature that eventually evolved into the human. If I am not wholly aberrant, there is something more than just interesting in the speculation of how this analogy came to be handed down to these illiterate and—can one say ignorant?—African witch doctors.

The shrew-mouse, having acquired the tune of the house, the wizard must catch it once more; and he must then feed it full of as many weird and nasty things and spells as it will hold. Much like the thought forces that the love-potion dealer wraps round her bolus. When the mouse is positively bristling with hate and death it must be reintroduced into the victim's house. There, like a busy radium cell, it will spark off its concentrated malignance all the while it runs about at night—while the man sleeps and his spirit has left him most absorbent—and the sparks, of course, will be hitting in tune with the man's vital cylinders. In the course of some days or weeks, depending upon the man's constitution, he will soak up enough poison either to pine away and die, or at the very least—this is guaranteed—to go so utterly crazy that he must be locked up for the rest of his life.

If a single mouse hasn't been able to carry enough magic venom, another must be doctored up and sped upon the fell work. A robust man may last into months and require quite a dozen shrews—mice, of course.

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One of the other kind usually is sufficient to drive a man to distraction. The price of the killing depends upon the time and the mice required—from ten to maybe as much as fifty dollars. But what matters either time or mice or a week's pay, if one can so satisfactorily dispose of one's enemy?

Perhaps, if I might live twenty more years in Abyssinia, and if I might become a naturalized witch doctor and be admitted to a licensed practice, I might be able to discover just how much truth there is to all this wizardry of death. Perhaps, too, when I should discover, I might be very much surprised.

A quite fascinating development that resulted out of my delvings into the dark realms of sorcery was a guarded proposition that came to me through the medium of one of the house boys from a wizard who offered to take me out to a certain spook-infested waterfall some night and there to raise behorned and betailed devils out of the lower pit.

This potent magician held out for twenty dollars for the feat. Real Christian devils with horns and tails are, of course, well worth twenty dollars. But I bargained for some sort of guarantee. If I was buying devils by night, I wanted to be sure that I got them. I offered to deal on the basis of two dollars a devil, with a dozen limit, which was all I felt I could handle at one time. But the wizard insisted on twenty dollars in advance. Nor could he be persuaded to give the satisfaction or money-back guarantee that any decent business should furnish.

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"For," said he, "how can this thing be judged? I will show you, perhaps, a hundred devils; and you may afterward say that you saw none. What proof is there?"

So the deal fell through. Which I regret very much indeed. For it was educated into my childhood that I ought to believe in devils just as much as in angels and things.

SLAVERY UNDER THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

To any American the question of slavery must appeal with arresting force. The condition is not so far distant in our own history that we cannot still feel the last receding ripples of the agitation that it stirred. A quite intricate study, involving much sifting of lies, that can well take care of every dull hour of a tedious rainy season when swollen rivers and impassable mud confine the inquisitive traveler to the city limits of the capital, is to go snooping around to get at the real facts of slavery in Abyssinia.

Perhaps it will come as a shock to American readers that, after careful inquiry, my own preconceived opinion of horror wavered; and that, after further and deeper investigation, my opinion changed entirely and is now one of distinct approval.

So startling a statement requires hasty qualification and definition. I do not mean that I, any more than any enlightened Abyssinian or the League of Nations, approve of slavery. But conditions, social and political, being what they are in Abyssinia to-day, I do not hesitate to put myself on record as approving in toto of

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the Ethiopian Government's sound policy of letting slavery die out with the existing generation, rather than permitting itself to be hustled by misinformed European sentiment and crafty clamor in various political presses into inviting a cataclysm, such as our own post-Civil War disorganization in the South, by an insane insistence upon immediate abolition.

I find myself at the very outset, by reason of the position I have taken, upon the defensive against the almost overpowering sentiment of the Christian world. I dare to maintain my stand only because I know that that sentiment, as before said, is not altogether accurately informed, and because slavery as it exists to-day in Abyssinia is vastly worse in execrated name than in actual fact. Vastly better, too, than peonage as it exists to-day in countries, also members of the League of Nations, which are not being constantly held up as horrible examples to the rest of the Christian world.

Our forefathers in America misinformed themselves about the horrors of slavery by reading "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and permitted themselves to be ballyhooed into a frightful war about it. Though we know now that slavery was but the popular camouflage to cover the deeper issue of secession. We know, too, that the war itself was not nearly so bad as its disastrous after-effects, from which, five decades later, some parts of the South have not yet wholly recovered.

It is the lesson of our post-Civil War conditions in America that stands as a warning ever present before the eyes of that very clear-sighted ruler and shrewd statesman, Algaurash Tafari Makonnen, prince regent

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of Ethiopia, and that strengthens his determination against the pressure that is being brought upon him by the sentimentalists through the League of Nations, of which his country is a newly admitted member.

A mere civil war he might face, to rise or fall with its fortunes if he thought that his country might profit thereby. But post-war disruption, smashed down upon a country just emerging into the light after its centuries of isolation, would throw it back a hundred years into barbarism. It is the post-war that this wise ruler will not tolerate.

And civil war there would be in Abyssinia within twenty-four hours of the signing of an edict of abolition. Our own South, with its tradition of a paltry couple of hundred years of slave labor, fought rather than relinquish a condition which it felt to be necessary to its welfare. Abyssinia has grown up with a tradition and exists upon institutions based upon five thousand years of slavery. A mode of life built upon institutions as old as all that cannot be rooted out of its sleepy comfort by the mere signing of an edict.

There are powerful chiefs in the grain- and cotton-bearing south and southwest of Abyssinia whose very existence depends—just as did that of our own South—upon slave labor for their plantations. Every family in the country, even those of quite moderate circumstances, must rely upon domestic slaves to carry on the manifold hand labor of the household—spinning, weaving, grinding corn, drawing water from deep and distant wells—even as did our own South before the days of swift transportation and electric kitchens.

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All these people would fight before relinquishing the necessities of their lives—even as did our own South.

Therefore it is that the prince regent has issued an edict which commands that those who have slaves may keep them. But that no man may buy or sell or in any manner trade in slaves; and that children born of slaves shall be automatically free from the moment of birth. This far-sighted ruling means that slavery will die out with the present generation; quietly, without disturbance, letting the country readjust its mode of living gradually as the new conditions will demand.

Nor is this edict a one-sided affair, designed all for the protection of the masters and none for the slaves. All the rest of a printed pamphlet of eleven pages deals with the regulations for the protection of slaves; not the least of which is the fact that they are not to be liberated en masse.

Slaves *have* been liberated, many of them voluntarily by their enlightened masters and many more by the ruling of the protective regulations. And having been liberated, what were they to do? Go out into the cold world and ask somebody to give them a job and a wage? It is not only in Abyssinia that jobs with wages are difficult to find all of a sudden.

Some of them, however, tried that and found that a man who paid a wage demanded a much more meticulous return in labor than any slave had ever been accustomed to render. Many more of them decided with rejoicing—as did ours of the South—that freedom was a synonym for unlimited opportunity to loaf. These quickly degenerated, as must all loafers, either

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into beggars or bandits. Some few, the wise ones, refused to go anywhere.

"We are our masters' servants," they insisted. "Where shall we go, without food, without work?"

And there they stayed in their masters' households. Which goes to show that the condition of slavery in Abyssinia is not the ghastly inhumanity that we have all been brought up to believe.

Some of the regulations for the protection of slaves are interesting.

A slave, if he thinks that he is being cruelly treated, may bring a charge to that effect against his master before judges appointed for that purpose. If the charge is upheld by the court, the slave—the wording is significant—"has the right to be freed," *if he wishes*.

If a slave runs away from his master, he may not be arrested anywhere within the confines of the country. But if he arrives at a frontier post without papers of liberation he is to be held and a message is to be sent to his master, who is then allowed eight days to come and fetch him; failing which, the slave "has the right to be freed." In a country where the frontier may be a journey of a month's hard travel the slave, it would seem, has a pretty fair chance of becoming his own master.

What would not *Uncle Tom* and *Eliza* or *Huck Finn's* nigger have given for a chance one tenth as good?

If a female slave should bear a child by her master, she immediately has the right to be freed. Or, conversely—and deliciously phrased—if a male slave

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should "become the favorite of his mistress," he has the same right.

If a slave should be sold or in any way conveyed to another person, that fact alone is sufficient to free him. Except that a man may leave his existing slaves to his son by will. Should a man die intestate, all his slaves become free. There are dozens of different ways by which a slave, under the prince regent's new edict, may acquire that "right to be freed." But the dozens who avail themselves of the right are very few.

As to the children of the slaves. These, as has been said, are automatically free at birth. But the masters of their parents cannot, for that reason, cast them out to fend for themselves and maybe grow up in criminal surroundings. They must feed and house them until they are fifteen years of age, after which the youngsters are free to go. Or, after the age of seven, at the option of their parents they may be sent to the Government school for slave children, where they will be kept and educated according to their bent and capacity, general or technical—*i.e.*, languages, weaving, carpentry, and so on; after which, posts in government employ, army, or church will be open to them *without discrimination*.

So that, like the products of our orphan asylums, they will be a lot better fitted to face the world than many a youth who has been allowed to grow up under the lax authority of ignorant parents.

This school has been organized and is directed by the Hakim Wargneh, one of the keenest brains in the country, who was educated and took medical degrees

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in England, practising under the anglicized name of Dr. Martin.

It is this Dr. Martin who quite recently came to America as the special representative of the prince regent, to visit President Coolidge and to convey the royal message of good-will to the American people and of appreciation that America had at last determined to appoint a minister to Ethiopia.

One of Dr. Martin's most important services to his country is the organization of a society comprising all the most enlightened and influential younger men of Ethiopia, who have pledged themselves to work for the general uplift of their less fortunate compatriots, and to begin by liberating all their own slaves.

The direct result as it has worked out in the doctor's own case is a delightful example of the reward upon earth that heaven gives to reformers. His wife, a princess of the land, had a hundred female slaves; and she, upon the formation of this society, made something of a ceremony of giving them all their liberty. The women accepted the gift with all the manifestations of joy that children evince upon receipt of a Christmas present that they haven't asked for. And they unanimously refused to go away.

"Our mistress is our mother. Our home is here. Where shall we go?" was their quite logical point of view.

So there they sit, all the hundred of them. It having been carefully explained to them during the ceremony that they were now free and that they need no

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longer take orders from any man unless they wished to, or hired themselves out to do so, they have accepted the comfortable information with African literalness. They squat in idle groups and jabber about nothing all day. They rise in surging herds and quarrel about nothing with appalling clamor. They take orders from no man unless they wish to. And they do as little work as they feel is necessary in order to oblige a mistress who was kind to them.

But they eat just as much as they ever did; and their mistress's traditional obligation toward the slaves of her household prevents her from throwing them out neck and crop. So she must still feed and clothe them as the family prestige demands. One whole hundred of them.

These are actual facts of slavery as it exists in Abyssinia to-day: the facts upon which I base my approval of the edict that, instead of attempting to abolish it with one foolish stroke of the pen, has decided to let it die out peacefully. I cannot but feel that others, when they know the facts, will come to agree with me that Abyssinia has taken the only way for the ultimate suppression of its domestic problem of slavery.

Some years ago, many long years ago, I was in the Chin and Kachin hills of Burma and found domestic slavery to be common and no very great secret. I knew it as well as district officials knew it. It doesn't seem to be so very many years ago—not more than three or four—that I remember seeing some mention of the fact that the British Government had sent an armed

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expedition into the hills and had liberated some eight hundred of them.

If England, with all her might and her centuries of civilization, found it impossible to root out slavery in one of her possessions until a few years ago, surely Abyssinia can be allowed a generation to root out her centuries of slavery.

An utterly fabulous statement found print in the American press not very long ago, quoting the prince regent as suggesting that American capital might undertake construction contracts in his country, employing slave labor and paying half the due wage to the slaves and half to their owners; so that the slaves, at the end of five years or so, might be able to purchase their freedom. Asking America, in other words, to become accessory to the fact and crime of slavery. This was one of the journalists whose memory is not easily forgotten.

His Highness, of course, utterly repudiates this fantastic statement. And why should he not? The regulations of his edict, printed and furnished to the League of Nations, and concurred in by the League as one of the conditions of Abyssinia's admission, offer a dozen vastly easier ways for a slave to gain his liberty if he wishes to do so; and he can then work for five years and keep his money for himself.

Surely since the American press has given print to the misstatement, the repudiation, as a plain matter of justice, should swiftly be printed also.

An equally vapid statement found its way recently into the British press, vouched for—in innocent

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stupidity, I believe—by a high cleric of the Church of England. This misguided gentleman, having spent nearly three weeks in the country, went home and abused the Ethiopian church roundly and announced in addition that a slave could be bought in Addis Abeba to-day for ten pounds sterling; and he added with calm fatuity that his information came from no less a source than a trusted official of the British legation.

The result has been that this official has been compelled to take a vacation to go to England to clear his own good name and to request a retraction from those British newspapers which gave space to the story. Which, with the fine sense of fair play which is a characteristic of British newspapers, they immediately did.

There are certain other European presses that have printed statements of equal and—it is claimed by Abyssinians—malicious inaccuracy; and they show no disposition to retract. The pity of it is that such statements do not tend to harmony and peace; and that it is those nationals who reside or travel in that country who must bear the brunt of the ill feeling.

The charge most commonly and most viciously promulgated is that slave raiding continues unchecked throughout all the borders of Ethiopia and that the Government shows no disposition to do anything to stop it—a charge which, if true, might well be a *casus belli* with which even the League of Nations could find no fault.

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Let us accord just a little justice to Ethiopia and look once more into facts.

This is what the prince's edict has to say about slave raiding. Any person buying or selling or in any way trading in slaves shall be fined, for the first offense, five hundred dollars and shall be sentenced to *ten years'* imprisonment. For the second offense, *life*.

Further, the governor of the province in which such offense might be committed shall be fined three hundred dollars the first time as a penalty for not regulating his province better; five hundred dollars the second time; and should it happen a third time, he shall be deprived of his governorship. The chief of the district and the chief of the tribe implicated shall be punished in proportion.

If a similar ruling were to be applied to some of our own officials responsible for the maintenance of our country's laws, I cannot help feeling that we might have fewer bootleggers and gunmen.

Of course there are violations. And it is these occasional violations that the European press all too often seizes upon to denounce the Ethiopian Government as careless and incompetent, and Abyssinia as a country that ought to be taken over and regulated by some strong power—the suggestion of the power depending upon the press that raves.

Leaving European nations out of the question, we can admit that in America violations of the law are not unknown. One of our very stringent laws, for instance, prohibits buying, selling, or in any way

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trading in narcotic drugs. Yet within our own New York city limits, with its twelve thousand, or whatever the number may be, police, costing, only the politicians know how many millions of dollars a year, criminals are found to-day who buy, sell, and trade in narcotic drugs because of the high percentage of profit in the business.

Along our borders, threaded by a network of telephone and railway lines, criminals are found—so I am told—who bring illegal liquor across the line because, it seems, they make money by the prohibited trade.

Yet it is not suggested that our Federal Government is hopelessly incompetent or that America be taken over and regulated by some strong European power.

Possibly because we are a people a hundred and a quarter million strong and are fortunate enough to be the richest nation in the world.

In Abyssinia there are only ten million people; though it is *unfortunate* enough to be the richest portion of all Africa. Its borders are in some places more than a month's journey from the seat of power. Can it by any stretch of human intolerance or reason be demanded that there must not be any criminals who might seize and bring a slave across the line because of the money to be made in the prohibited trade?

We in America are still close enough to the problem of slavery and its results to understand the difficulties. Let us give Abyssinia a square deal, as the League

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of Nations is trying to do in spite of the bullyragging of some of its influential members. Let us look into the history of slavery and see if we can find a more humane and sensible measure for its suppression than the edict of his Highness Algaurash Tafari Makonnen.

There is an amusing—if it is not too sinister to be amusing—side to the question of slavery in Abyssinia. This side is presented by those people who do not exist—the propagandists.

Everybody has read in the fairly recent press about the horrible discovery of the all unsuspected fact of the existence of domestic slavery in Liberia.

Unsuspected by whom? cynically demand the propag—pardon, but they don't exist. I repudiate the thought. There exist gentlemen, suave, marvelously well-informed on all matters of world politics, masters of many languages. One meets them in the Greek cafés, in the Armenian eating-houses. It is difficult to place the nationality of most of these clever cosmopolitans. Some of them, to a keen ear, might seem to have a faint trace of a Russian accent. Some of them remain enigmas.

But they all talk politics. They would rather disperse political scandal than anything else. Many of them will willingly pay for the tiny cup of thick, sweet Turkish coffee that sociability demands for the privilege of buttonholing a listener.

Some of these interesting people don't like the French; some don't like the Italians; some don't like

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the British; some just hate every nation that has a stable government, and the more stable the government, the more virulent the hate.

They steam over with international scandal, do these gentlemen—and scandal, of course, is always easy to listen to.

About this matter of slavery they grin with huge cynicism. Who was it who never suspected slavery in Liberia, they ask? The Europeans or Americans who work the big rubber concessions there? The big company officials perhaps? Didn't they really know? The big virtuous newspapers maybe? Ha, ha, did people live nowadays who believed that any modern newspaper, by digging into its morgue, could not unearth that information? Were the big political leaders of Europe such ignorant men?

Well, who, then, didn't know anything about slavery existing in Liberia? Who was there who didn't know about domestic slavery existing still in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan; or in most of Arabia; or in central China; or in half a dozen different places?

Why, then, all this sudden fuss and virtuous horror about Liberia? Why, indeed?

The clever gentlemen almost snarl the answer to their question; and they take one's breath away by the fantastic boldness of their charges.

One notes, they point out wolfishly, that into all these outpourings about Liberia in the European press the analogy of Abyssinia is invariably introduced. Liberia is theoretically a free country of

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Africa; Abyssinia is really so. The comparison is easy to draw. Well, here are all the virtuous major nations of Europe getting together to root out slavery from Liberia. What, then, is being done in Abyssinia about this horrible thing? Nothing? Woof, woof and wow!

And why this uncomfortable rattling of skeletons about the ears of poor Abyssinia? Ha, ha, the scandalously clever gentlemen point with the grimy finger of conviction. Axes to grind. Because Abyssinia is too potentially rich. Because certain of those major nations of Europe would like to divide the country up between themselves—they mention names and talk about partition maps and secret treaties, do these clever gentlemen. Because Abyssinia, being a member of the League of Nations, which has agreed to the conditions of slavery, as set forth above, would be difficult to attack with justification before the eyes of the world.

Therefore . . . and the so marvelously well-informed gentlemen clinch their argument in triumph. All this constant battering of Abyssinia on the question of slavery is to the insidiously designed end that the public sentiment of those major nations may be so aroused as to demand the expulsion of Abyssinia from the League of Civilized Nations. And then, when that Machiavellian plot has been accomplished—why, then it will be easy for those major nations to find the age-old excuse for marching into the country. The excuse that has already placed all the rest of Africa in their hands—the killing of one of these nationals

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and the immediate occupation by their troops—"to protect their subjects."

One sits aghast as one listens to the wild imaginings of these plausible gentlemen who speak with such intimate detail of knowledge. They seem to know so frightfully much. Their statements come so pat.

One wonders what axes these clever gentlemen themselves have to grind. But at the same time one cannot help asking one's self, Can it be that there is no fire behind all that smoke?

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KEEPING house in Addis Abeba, the largest city of Abyssinia, Africa, is more than a little different from keeping house in an apartment in New York, the largest city of America.

Americans, however, are almost non-existent in Abyssinia—and white folks' houses correspondingly scarce. The would-be house-owner, therefore, is faced with the problem of having one built.

Here there are two choices. One may be very rich and have a modern house built of stone, like the splendid foreign legations; or one may be an ordinary mortal and be obliged to content one's self with the more attainable "*chicka* built."

A "*chicka* built" is a skeleton clothed in mud and roofed with corrugated iron. The *chicka* built is a footless thing of sticks and strings. Foundationless. Poles of various shapes, lengths, and thicknesses are just thrust into a two-foot trench, which is then filled up with mud and tramped down. Other poles, thicker, or thinner, or split, are tied to these uprights more or less horizontally or diagonally with string or bits of

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wire or unraveled rope, till a fairly stout fence has been achieved.

Over this fence comes "*chicka*." *Chicka* is mud; the same sticky clay that so effectively gums up the trails. For building purposes it is made even more effective by the addition of straw well trampled in. It is probably the identical mixture that the Israelites had to make bricks out of in the time of their bondage. *Chicka* well mixed and trampled hardens almost as solid as cement. It is the one heaven-sent building material of Abyssinia.

Chicka clings, terribly, awfully, gobbily, to everything it touches. It clings wonderfully to a skeleton of sticks and strings. When mixed with the fermented sweepings of the stable, it clings with the tenacity of mortar.

Walls of this wattle-and-daub may be anything from six inches to a couple of feet thick, depending upon the perseverance of the builder and the purse of the owner. It is astonishing how smooth such walls may be made.

Roof beams, often hand-hewn—for labor is cheaper than machinery—are set up on such walls at a low angle, tied with string, and left to the covering corrugated iron sheets to hold them together. Upon this oven top the African sun beats like a blast furnace, and the monsoon rains like the roar of Niagara.

A ceiling of six inch plaster would be needed to mitigate that heat and sound. But since plaster must come from Europe, and must pay a heavy duty as well as an exorbitant railway freight, a double ceiling of

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cloth is stretched overhead and whitewashed, and, if well done, defies detection—until the rats race over it in their gambols, and one wonders whether this time they will fall through.

Floors, if one is an ordinary mortal, may be of *chicka* stamped rock hard, and covered with matting. Or, if one is esthetic and rich, maybe of boards—which have to be carried on mule or man back from a distance of five or six days' journey; for in Addis Abeba no trees grow but eucalyptus; and eucalyptus seems to be useless for all purposes except scented fire-wood.

Windows on the French pattern are made by Greek carpenters and stuck in their appropriate holes with *chicka*—and never close tight, for the reason that the wood has never been seasoned. For which same reason all doors and windows in a *chicka* built presently have cracks in them through which one can put one's fingers. But one fills these up with *chicka*.

Walls are plastered outside with *chicka* and inside with the wall-papers that one sees in pattern books and wonders why.

And behold! the *chicka* built is ready for occupancy.

There may be three rooms or four and perhaps a veranda created by the extension of the tin roof. Such a mansion may cost between four and five hundred dollars to build and twelve dollars a month to rent.

But the furniture for this house, the barest possible collection of tables and chairs and beds, and so on, would cost at least twice as much as the house. For every stick of it must be imported from Europe, or

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made by hand by Greek carpenters who value their hands like Mischa Elman. The only furniture native to Abyssinia is a little table made of straw and rawhide. Some square, some round, some high, some low. Much can be done with these, and they cost all of fifty cents each. This is the only native furniture, that is to say, that a foreigner can use. There are also native beds, crude wooden frames interwoven with strips of rawhide with the hair left on—very, very raw hide.

No house is complete without its compound, fenced in with the same poles that go to make the walls. In one corner of the compound is a *chicka* built stall for the horses or mules—for every one in Addis Abeba must ride—and next to it is another exactly similar stall for the servants; for no white person in Addis Abeba can keep house even in three rooms without at least four servants.

In another corner of the compound is the unsavory den that breaks every white woman's heart in Abyssinia—the kitchen.

Another far corner supports the outhouse. There is no bath-room. If one wishes to bathe one must have a *chicka* shed built for the purpose. This is easy, because one has no bath-tub or heating apparatus to install. One needs no more than a hole in the corner of the wall to let the water out and the frogs in. Hot water is mercifully furnished by Providence. At a place called Filwoha, hot springs gush forth, and Providence has also supplied a sturdy tribe of hereditary porters known as Gouragis, who for nine cents will carry a five-gallon Standard Oil can full of hot spring-water

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the mile or more from the Filwoha to one's home. It is cheaper to employ three Gouragis for a bath than to heat that much water with fire-wood.

Somewhere in the compound there is, or should be, a well from which water to reduce the hot spring to bathing temperature can be drawn in another Standard Oil can. A tin dipper completes the equipment. That is to say for white folks. But there are folks from the not so white portions of Europe who require a servant to wield the dipper.

It will be understood that the servant problem in Abyssinia is not so severe.

Four servants for three rooms have a sound of fearsome expense. And fearsome they are, though not in point of cost. It is the heartrending exasperation of superintending their everlasting misdoings that brings silver threads among the gold or brown or black or whatever it may be of the housekeeper in Abyssinia.

Let the overburdened light-housekeeper of America consider the minimum of four.

The most important perhaps is the boy; who must also act as interpreter to render "missus' " English into his own unthinkable and unpronounceable Amharic. The fact that he always translates his version to suit his own intrigues explains at least half of missus' recurrent troubles with the others. The boy's duties are manifold, and last from as long before dawn as he can be awakened to as long after dark as he can keep awake. His first duty is to wake the cook and to bring the coffee and rolls to missus' bed. After that he be-

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comes chambermaid, waiter, errand boy, shoe-black, and anything else that missus can think of; and with long training a good boy may be taught sometimes to carry one of these jobs through to its conclusion without having to be directed in each detail of its operation. A single boy, in fact, can be relied upon to keep an energetic mistress busy pretty well throughout the day.

But the institution of boy has its good points. The most outstanding of which is that he draws all of five dollars a month for his misdeeds. And the next cheering consideration is that he has no private spare time off at all. Nobody knows when the boy stops off to eat; for he must be on call at all times. Nor has he any definite time off for his personal needs. Except that sometimes he will come and beg an hour off to go and collect a debt. Or he will ask for fifty cents advance of pay to liquidate his brother's fine for fighting in the street, and get him out of the lock-up. Or—pernicious license—since the English-speaking boy is invariably mission taught, he must have his Sunday morning to go to church. But—ponder this, my wealthy American sisters who employ help—there is no such thing as a day off for the boy, and particularly not a night off, because in Addis Abeba is a wholesome curfew law which does not permit any native to be out after dark without a permit from the municipality.

Distances in Addis Abeba are so great, roads so poor, and the altitude of eight thousand feet is so breath-rending that missus must ride to and from her

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social engagements. Therefore, there must be a horse or a pacing mule, and to look after it, a horse boy or a *sais*—another monthly chasm in the exchequer to the extent of four dollars.

This boy would seem to have an easy time of it, until it is remembered that whenever missus rides, he runs; and however far or however fast missus rides, he must be on hand to hold the bridle when she dismounts.

The horse boy's contribution to missus' gray hairs comes from the fact that he, as well as all the other servants, eat the same grain that the horse eats. And it is up to the missus to see that the horse remains at least as fat as the boy.

There have been foolish trusting people who thought that it was sufficient to give the *sais* a dollar from time to time to buy *goeps*, which is barley, and *shimbura*, which is grain, and another dollar for hay; and to hope, then, that the animals would get at least a reasonable proportion of the grain, say an even weight for weight against the *sais*. But this fatuity resulted in the death of the horse and the great profit in person as well as purse of the *sais*, who sold what he and his family could not eat.

These foolish trusting ones were the author and his missus.

No, missus must see that for her dollar she gets a full basket measure of grain; and she must then immediately lock it up in a strong box. Once a day thereafter she must dole out the proper amount for the horse's meal—and if she is wise she will stand by

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and see that it eats it to the last grain—that is to say, if she wants the horse to have the last grain. Horse boys don't eat hay—much; but missus can't stand by all day to watch the horse munch grass; so the *sais* makes his little bit anyway in a minute hay business.

In Addis Abeba a garden is as necessary as a house. Flowers grow so riotously, and bridge parties with the same three people become so deadly, that one runs for entertainment to the flowers. And besides, work must be found for the sturdy fellow who must watch the gate and keep loafers and robbers out of the compound. Flowers in Addis Abeba grow like weeds anywhere else. Carnations and roses and all other flowers that are once planted will grow the year round in paradisaical profusion.

There is no winter, you see, in Addis Abeba. The daily average temperature all the year round remains close to seventy degrees Fahrenheit. So that flowers maintain a continuous rotation of bud and bloom and seed. And all the flowers that were the pampered favorites at home are here weed-wild all the year round. Flowers to excess are difficult for the American gardener to conceive of; yet it is here a truth that the surplus must be weeded out and burnt to prevent the choking of available space.

There is only a single natural restriction to the profusion of flowers—the dry season. They must then be watered. And the water must be drawn hand over hand in a Standard Oil can out of a sixty-five- or

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an eighty-foot well. This is where the sturdy guardian of the gate earns his salary of four dollars a month. But he earns it, alas! unwillingly, and upon the depth of the well depends the depth of the lines on missus' face.

This boy is called the *zabanya*, which means really the policeman, but has come to include the duties of gate-keeper or hallboy. Gate-keepers and hallboys all the world over have their perquisites; and in Abyssinia the perquisites of the various professions have become unbreakable tradition. The tradition of the gate-keeper class is to keep people outside of the gate until they have paid the proper infinitesimal backsheesh. When, therefore, some stout-hearted peddler of something that missus may want refuses to be mulcted, missus learns nothing about the call; and maybe she spends weeks wondering why such and such a vendor who has been met in the street and requisitioned does not come.

In spite of all these boys, however, life in Addis Abeba with its perfect climate might be pleasant enough if only, alas! one did not have to eat. It is to be supposed that harmony may exist between a lady and her cook in other parts of the world, but in Abyssinia so Utopian a condition is impossible. There are too many differences of thought, of heredity, of upbringing, and of hygienic tradition.

There is a single startling advice that old-timers give to the new-comer, "My dear, never go into your kitchen!"

Many thousands of white folks, men and women,

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have broken themselves against the unbreakable wall of African tradition. The new-comer, in a frenzy of horror at the conditions in the Abyssinian kitchen, tries to hurl her puny self against five thousand years of Africa. Some who have been young and strong-minded have been known to last as long as nearly a year before, sapped of resistance and broken in spirit, they have let the kitchen relapse to the ancient unchangeable sway.

Cooks the world over have their reputation of being temperamental. Not so in Abyssinia. Missus hires a red-eyed hereditary chief of the ancient mysteries, who, with the dogged perseverance of an animal, will thenceforth forge ahead and do exactly as his great-great-grandfathers have done before him.

Missus' first attack will be upon the kitchen. If she has been able to buy or hire an old house she will find in a corner of the compound a dark, windowless, unventilated lair papered with the deposited soot of years. When her eyes become accustomed to the gloom, she will distinguish a low mud shelf with two or three square holes in it covered by grates. There may be another longer mud shelf in handy proximity to the thing with the grates, and possibly two or three black horizontal places which investigation proves to be wooden shelves. Cooky-boy surveys this smoke-house with approval and is happy.

If missus has her own *chicka* built she introduces revolutionary ideas. An iron stove, perhaps, and maybe a kitchen-table with dish-mop and soap, and as near a semblance as may be possible to a sink where

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there is no running water. She may even have been insistent enough to persuade the builders to put in a window.

Cooky-boy looks upon these innovations with imperturbable calm. His grandfathers have seen such things before him and have triumphed. The basic cause of battle thereafter will be missus' feeble attempts to keep this place as it is and Cooky's slow, irresistible determination to make it as he knows it ought to be.

Sometimes it takes a month, sometimes a week, before missus is an invalid and the window can no longer be opened and smoke begins to tone down the vulgar newness of things and the iron stove is stuffed with garbage and Cooky has built for himself a mud shelf with square holes in it in which he burns charcoal or acrid cattle chips and his eyes inflame red once more and he is happy.

His day, though, is quite a busy one. Coffee must be made at 6 A.M. so that the boy can bring it to missus' bedside. Missus will be awake, roused from her beauty sleep by the matutinal squabble over the burning question of whether the boy keeps the cook waiting or whether the cook keeps the boy waiting. Cooky has the better excuse, for it is the custom nobody has ever been able to break that coffee must be bought green and roasted fresh every morning. This is done by Cooky in the frying-pan, and it takes a right energetic missus to see that the coffee is not flavored with onions.

There have been stern, hard-featured women who

have managed in the course of time to train a cook to keep and use a special pan for roasting coffee, and have still pondered over the fleeting aromas of garlic and meat and spices of the East—till they have discovered that Cooky has long ago lost some integral part of the coffee-mill and has been grinding the coffee in the meat chopper.

Cooky's next duty is to go and do the marketing. He goes with a bad grace, for his dignity demands, and in large households is conceded, an assistant to do the marketing and wash the dishes; and he cannot see why his dignity should suffer because missus has the ill taste to live in a three-room bungalow with a single husband.

There has not yet been a cook who can do the marketing without supervision. Missus must be up and dressed and must give him his daily instructions in detail. Meat, one quarter; a paper twist of beets, one cent; a paper twist of soup greens, another cent. A paper twist of carrots, also for a cent.

And missus must be up good and early; for so little comes into the market that if the cook doesn't get there betimes nothing will be left. Staples missus deals out personally. Six potatoes, four onions, two teaspoons of sugar, six cloves, a pinch of salt. In the first week of her newness she learned how miraculously these things in bulk could disappear. Sugar she could understand, and perhaps flour; but who could eat up, for instance, a whole can of grated nutmeg in seven days?

The preparation of these things for the table must

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be left to the cook. For no chef, neither Cooky here nor Katinka back home, will stand for interference in the sacred mysteries. So missus can take one of two choices: either to insist upon forcing entry into the cook's smoke-house and losing her appetite fighting about its appalling unsanitariness, or to stay out of there and lose her appetite thinking about it.

There exists one kitchen in Addis Abeba that has a clean cement floor and two windows that open and a Swedish iron stove as well as the mud shelf with the square holes and tables scrubbed almost white and pots all hanging in a neat row. But the fortunate lady to whom all this belongs is a strong-minded missionary and does her own cooking; though even she has fallen from Christian grace to the level of the mud shelf with the square holes.

She says it is because she has never been able to train a boy to cut up fire-wood into the lengths that would go into the Swedish stove. But that is only an excuse to cover her defeat. She has succumbed to an immemorial custom which is stronger even than missionaries.

Is it to be wondered that by the time lunch is over, missus is ready for a siesta?—out of which she is awakened by the shouts and yells of a furious quarrel. Since murder in her compound would be something of a nuisance, she rushes out to see what it is all about; and both Cooky and the *zabanya* immediately divert their screamings to her, the former insisting that it is not his job to draw water out of an eighty-foot well for the dishes, and the latter maintaining with equal

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vigor that he was not hired as a cook's assistant. Missus has long been convinced that chastisement ought to descend upon the cook. Yet on the other hand, *zabanyas* are easier to replace than cooks. So she imposes a judgment of Solomon by calling in a Gouragi from outside to draw the water.

To soothe her nerves so that she may be the bright and cheerful little helpmate over the dinner-table, missus may take a walk in her garden to pick a few flowers for her centerpiece, and will be met with the recurring vexation of those tall chrysanthemums that she planted to hide the dinginess of that kitchen door. She has been wondering for a long time why those plants would not thrive. She is inclined to accuse the *zabanya* of not watering them. But the soil about them seems always to be moist. It is another mystery of Africa, until she begins to detect a vague, sour odor about that particular plot of ground—an odor not of chrysanthemums but of long-standing garbage. A little sleuthing will then disclose the obvious fact that the cook, quite naturally, has been throwing dish-water right out at the door, as his fathers have done before him and as his sons will continue to do.

Perhaps this will be the last straw of exasperation, and missus will take the bold step and fire her tormentor, and with face set in stern resolution will decide to lighten her life of half its burden and do her own cooking, and also to save thereby the wretched man's exorbitant salary of ten dollars a month. Which will mean that she first must do her own marketing.

And what a business a dollar's worth of marketing

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proves to be! For missus must take the boy to act as interpreter; she must take the horse boy to run after the horse and hold it while she is selecting her paper twists; and she must hire a Gouragi with a basket to carry the purchases.

Experienced housewives, used to purchasing for families of seven and ten, may think scornfully of a little marketing for two. But what would they do in a land where there are no stalls; where everything is sold off mats or banana leaves in the open streets; where nothing can be found twice in the same place? Missus must walk perhaps the length of two streets, threading her way between banana leaves and stepping over the protuberances of their possessors, before she can come to a mat of potatoes.

Then, since nothing is sold by weight, she must guess whether she is getting as big a lapful of potatoes for three *pesas* as Cooky used to. And it is a moot point which varies more, the quantity of the potatoes or the value of the *pesa*.

For Abyssinia is a land where money values fluctuate day by day more than do stocks in Wall Street. The Government maintains a theory of sixteen *piastres* to the *thaler*, which is half a dollar American, and two *pesas* to a *piastre*. But the dealers in the market stocks, through some telepathic system of communication of their own, decide in a body that to-day there will be only fourteen *piastres* to the *thaler*, or perhaps even only *twelve*; and missus may walk the whole length and breadth of the market without getting more than twelve *piastres* change for her *thaler*; though

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she will get the same more or less lapful of potatoes or onions or whatever else it may be for her *piastres*.

Or, again, her filet of goat steak may be quoted at four *piastres*; but when she gives eight copper *pesas* in payment she is told that three *pesas* make a *piastre* to-day. In tears and frenzy missus is driven to the desperate admission that the one and only standard article of commerce in all the land is the paper twist of beets or soup greens, which always costs one *pesa*.

A morning of twisted mathematics and dusty roads does not put missus in the mood to prepare one of those lunches which she has read up in the daily menu pages of her dietetics book. Two mornings of it, or three, reduce her to a state of submission in which she welcomes the boy's announcement of, "Missus, one Cooky boy is stand outside and tell he want from work."

And so the battle of life continues as before. The battle in which there can be but one loser, and that one's identity is inevitable; and she pays the penalty in frazzled nerves and silver threads and thin lines about the eyes that once were young.

Be contented, therefore, you harassed light-house-keepers of America who yearn for servants. Be glad that your servants, instead of boys and *zabanyas* and cooks, are strong, silent genii that live in vacuum cleaners and hot-water faucets and gas-pipes and in all the other abominations of a three-room flat.

CHAPTER XVI

ALONE IN THE WILDS

It is a noteworthy dispensation of the rain gods of Ethiopia that quite the worst rainfall of the country descends upon Addis Abeba. Which fact impels a small digression for the propounding of the inquiry as to why so many of the world's capitals have been pitched upon such needlessly insalubrious locations.

What malicious fate forced those hardy Dutchmen to settle upon Manhattan Island with its terrible winters? Far-sighted recognition of its splendid harbor facilities? Yes, but why might it not have been vouchsafed to them to have discovered, say, Chesapeake Bay first?

What foolish force enabled the great god Lud of London to establish the seeds of a huge capital far up a useless little river? Why not Plym of Plymouth?

Was it Cal of Calcutta who prevailed upon Clive to go a hundred miles up the most treacherous river in the world into the middle of a six-months monsoon and to choose a site of accumulated sewage and silt so unstable that no big building can ever be erected upon it? What woolly mountain djinns persuaded the pioneers to choose Simla, the summer capital of India,

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or Darjeeling, the charming sanitarium, when either of them, moved only twenty miles to the next ridge, equally accessible, would draw about one third less mist and fog and rain?

Why Paris rather than Marseilles, when the latter had a better port, a far better climate, was earlier settled, and was already loved by the Romans?

What freak of insanity made the old Spanish conquistador decide upon the chill, woodless eminence of La Paz in Bolivia, when but a hundred miles distant, in territory he already knew, and below timber line, were a dozen more favorable sites? Why Queb—but I find that I don't know which sunless city is the capital of Canada. May the Lord have mercy on its wintry soul anyhow!

And so it is with Addis Abeba. The great Menelek chose it. His sole reason seems to have been that the available fire-wood supply was exhausted in the neighborhood of his existing capital at Ankober. There was about a five-year supply of skimpy mimosa in view near the new site. There was no water. There was horrible chloride-laden subsoil to poison the wells, and the slipperiest *chicka* clay top-soil to turn the roads into toboggan slides during the rainy season. And there was rain. Ropes of it. So solid that a good fish might swim up to the clouds; which were not so very far away, for the new site was eight clammy thousand feet up in the air.

Later on Menelek realized his mistake and would have moved again. But he had been wise enough to issue a decree that everybody should plant eucalyptus-

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trees; and a forest of these was coming on apace to settle forever the question of fire-wood. In the meanwhile, too, foreign legations had built expensive homes and offices; and they intimated to him that they had no inclination to abandon everything and start all over again each time he conceived a whim that moving-day had arrived.

And so was the thoughtless error established. Half a day's journey away is a huge empty district, high enough to be free from mosquitos, low enough to grow almost every kind of fruit and vegetable on earth; having a rich black top-soil to nourish their roots and an all the year round river to supply the necessary water; and with a third less rain.

But the potent weather gods who delight to manifest their paramount attribute of discomfort upon men injected their insidious malice into the mind of the ruler. And so he chose the present site of Addis Abeba. Perhaps the high mountain of Entoo behind the city is the only place in the country that might have been worse.

There is a compensation, however, that these weather gods expend so much of their rain upon the folk in the city. For that means that there must needs be less rain in the other parts of the country. There are districts where the "little rains" are sharp and swift and where there is a travelable interim of a month or so before the "big rains" come along and prove that the biblical flood was a very believable truth.

This travelable interim calls with allure to the bold expeditionist who has existed through a "little rain"

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in the city and nurtures the fond hope of leaning heavily upon the stout rope of letters and making a great deal of money by writing a book about his perilous adventures. If, that is to say, he is a hardy he-man of the wide open spaces. For, let it be whispered, there are two ways of writing books about travel. One is to load up a caravan and trek forth to go-look-see. The other is to sit on the hotel veranda dressed in riding-boots and a sun helmet, surrounded by many long cool drinks and many more old-timers who just naturally grow on hotel verandas, and to ask very many questions; and then to write one's book by the help of one's notes and one's imagination.

This latter method is much to be recommended. It is less expensive; it is not nearly so strenuous as trekking; its dramatic possibilities are infinitely greater; and it usually makes much more money.

There are, however, those who are so constituted that they would rather travel than write books. Of such constitution, unfortunately, am I. And quite as much so is the life partner who holds the deciding vote.

So those not so wet districts call us with siren voice. Albeit they are down in the three and four thousand-foot levels where the new mosquito crop of the little rains has just ripened and is waiting hopefully for its harvest of hardy explorer persons who might be lured by rumors of lions and rhinoceroses and things.

Dark tales of black water fever are told about those districts; and every now and then some unfortunate white man farmer pioneer comes up to the hospital in

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a pitiful hurry and dies of it. But there is a German pharmacy in the town that sells this marvelous new malaria remedy, plasmochin, which, so says the accompanying literature, annihilates malaria germs in three days.

"Don't load your system up with quinine," is the burden of the selling talk. "Don't so accustom yourself to the drug that when the fever does come—as it surely will, in spite of prophylactic measures—you will have to take large doses of thirty and forty grains to get any effect and will thus surely invite the terrible black water. Go around; enjoy your food without a permanent bitter flavor. Let the fever come and kill it with "plasmochin."

It all sounds alluringly plausible. Just what everybody's experience with malaria has been. It is a moot question now whether the German law permits a quack to get away with as much lying advertising as do ours. Possibly not. For no less than three men who used to come in from the trail all shaken apart with malaria tell us that the thing has worked magic with them.

It was discovered by the same wizard who worked out the formula for that other miracle that renders animals immune to tsetse fly and cures sleeping sickness.

The good story that seeps up into Abyssinia from the Kenya seems to indicate that the British medical officials of the colony at first derided the magniloquent claims of this marvel. Then a colleague of the German wizard went out and offered to bet them. Let them

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infect a hundred horses and cattle with tsetse and a hundred niggers with sleeping sickness—or, possibly they knew of a hundred sleepy niggers already—and he would guarantee to cure them.

So they took him on and produced the live-stock and he injected them with his magic elixir, and all the two hundred of them recovered. Then the medical officials embraced him and said that this was a miraculous discovery that would be the saving of Africa and would be of enormous benefit to the whole world besides; and the colleague of the German wizard said:

"Yes, we know it. And we'll give it to the world when the world gives us back our colonies."

Possibly this is just one of the stories that circulate so far from the centers of accurate information, and maybe it is promulgated by those suave gentlemen who have such a store of interesting stories about world diplomacies. It is, at all events, true that a German scientifico went from Addis down to the Kenya border with eighteen injected mules; and they all came back alive and were immediately resold in the city for frightful sums of money. And another expedition went with forty mules down into the same district to catch wild animals; and not one of them came back alive.

So we feel much inclined to pin some faith on the wizard's other miracle, and we postpone for a future imprisonment in the city through the "big rains" the urban pastimes of information snooping among the hotel veranda habitués and the suave gentlemen. Were we a scientific expedition, I could call it collecting data.

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I point out to my controlling factor that she doesn't like hyenas and that she hates riding along a slippery trail and that thorn scrub annoys her a lot and that a renowned lady doctor in New York told her that a woman who got malaria would never be the same again and that this was an uncomfortable and an undignified business, *this running around in the wet and in the open; sometimes hungry, very often thirsty, more often saddle sore, not always washed, and dressed all the time in bleached khaki clothes of a ghastly fit.*

But she will come.

They're just the eternal mystery.

The second wandering into the wilderness. Alone and unafraid. When a dauntless explorer person says, alone, in Africa he means unaccompanied by any other white man. He may have a hundred porters and a twenty-team ox-wagon and half a dozen quarter-breed drivers and a dozen armed askaris. But if he has no white companion he is "alone in the trackless wastes."

No such splendidly equipped caravan, alas! was our own. The list comes out of my library of African travel. But caravans very nearly as magnificent do go out, even from Abyssinia. There came a titled Englishman who was an ex-governor of a British colony, and he brought with him an Indian rajah whose income reminded one of those statistics about the distance in light years of the farther stellar systems, and the rajah brought a retinue such as is befitting to his kind.

They were preparing to trek eastward through a

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district with an evil reputation called Ogaden into British Somaliland and out via Berbera. The British minister to the court of Ethiopia bestirred himself to obtain special permits from the prince regent and special passports from the minister of the interior; and secretaries of the legation hustled to engage nagadis and to bind them with unbreakable contracts; and nagadis scurried to buy up extra mules for the invasion. I hesitate to say how many mules. I don't know, as a matter of fact. But the price of mules and mule feed soared so that I couldn't think of buying even a small caravan.

A tremor of excitement shook the capital for a couple of weeks. On the Somaliland side the borderland officials must have had high temperatures. For an army of Abyssinian nagadis and camp followers could never be permitted to trek through to Berbera. So hard-working British officials on that side hurried to organize a relay caravan of many camels, with their own attendant army of smelly Somalis, to wait on the border and take over the extravagant expedition.

The titled Englishman is quoted as saying that it costs any man a thousand pounds to shoot a lion and an elephant; and his preparations were on a corresponding scale. He talked of organizing a herd of Somali horsemen to ride down lions and things for the delectation of his rajah.

I heard all about this splendor and I wept. That was the proper, the only, way to go forth into the trackless wastes and slay large and ferocious beasts. So I made

humble negotiations to discover whether there might not be some means of getting in on an expedition such as I had always wanted to accompany ever since I had read about them in books.

My plea was received with the courtesy that one always receives from Englishmen of position. But, after due deliberation, it was conveyed to me politely and apologetically, by a secretary of the British legation, that the titled Englishman had decided that he did not want a "journalist" on his expedition. The secretary was tactful enough not to make it pointed and say an American journalist. But I understood. I have already written that American journalists are not particularly looked up to in Abyssinia. And I, being a traveler person who hoped to draw upon the rope of letters for the dragging out of my little expedition, was tainted with that lack of principle which, in official British and Abyssinian eyes, is the characteristic of the great brotherhood of American ink-slingers. This ribald book will doubtless confirm that opinion.

So I wept loudly once more and sought comfort from my stanch partner who shares the better things of life with me. And she told me to quit moaning over that measly old expedition; we'd just make our own caravan and go into those same trackless wastes alone on our own, and we'd have a much better time anyway. All of which turned out to be most prophetically true—as it so often does when their intuition decides.

So we made up our own expedition of four entirely hairless and very evil-tempered camels and a sulky Arab boy to beat them with a long bamboo, and five

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camp boys and a crafty Amhara hunter by the name of Atto Desta who had won our hearts during our last trip. And we *bought* our own riding animals.

No nagadis this time. We remained true to our oath never to deal with nagadis again except as enemies. No comforting and reliable Hunter Jim. We knew everything about African travel now, we felt. We and Atto Desta. Alone we fared, therefore, into the wilds.

For the camera expert who was to have come with us to furnish those photographs for the rotogravures, depicting us standing with our feet upon dead lions or seated upon the heads of elephants, said that he couldn't risk his health down in those fever-laden lowlands for such commonplace and uncommercially profitable film as that.

And who shall say that he was not right? For it turned out that we didn't find any dead lions or elephants; and his various thousands of feet of film, as his employers complained, were 92 per cent. out of focus anyhow.

Old Atto Desta was a man who bore his scars of experience. He had an impossible circular weal where his neck must have been cut all the way through in a war against the Shankallas. Two fingers of his right hand had been hewn from him in a private fight with shield and spear. Three fingers of his left hand had been blown off in an explosion of a gas-pipe trade gun such as nobody but an African would dare to use. And he limped just a little on his right leg, which had been clawed from thigh to ankle by a leopard one time

when the gun didn't go off. There were other smaller scratches too.

With our own great store of knowledge, therefore, and with the little that Desta might have picked up, we thought that we might survive.

We had a splendid tip this time: a secret imparted to us by one of the hotel veranda old-timers. Down along the borders of this Ogaden district he knew of a place, a lost valley that lay far enough off the trail to have remained undisturbed. One went two days down the railroad till one got past that pestiferous Hawash River that cut the country in two from west to east, and then one struck sharply to the right between two steep-sided buttes and kept going for two more days or three, according to one's caravan speed. The place was marked by the perfect cone of an old volcano, at the foot of which nestled a lake of good drinking-water with no crocodiles in it. Greater as well as lesser koodoo and a fine selection of boks and beestes browsed on the slopes, and—thrilling secret—in the grass plains to the south were rhino!

This was a secret, we felt, as valuable as Martin Johnson's "Paradise Lake" not so far to the south of Abyssinia, the location of which he will divulge to nobody—but which is known to all the East Africander exiles in Abyssinia. This would be our immediate objective.

The directions worked out with the perfection of all good ground-floor tips. There *was* a train and from the appointed jumping-off place the pass between two steep buttes *could* be seen. But the conical volcano could by

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no stretch of ten-leagued boots be reduced to two days' travel with pack camels; and it turned out to be three lakes; and the crocodiles in them ranged up to twelve lean and hungry feet, basking in rows on the sand-spits—though that we did not find out till later.

I used to think that Kipling had said all the evil that could be said about camels. But, trying to drive an Arab boy to drive camels over an impossible two days' march and through innumerable gullies that were yet conceited with the little rains, I could think of a lot of things that Kipling hadn't touched.

The first day out was another joyous first trek after a period of softening-up out of the saddle. From 8 A.M. until it was too dark to see accurately enough to hit the camel boy so he would hit his camels. . . . It seems that only a hereditary camel-driver knows how to hit a camel so that it will speed up rather than give vent to a bubbly howl and kick out with two feet at once at utterly unguessable angles. That trek taught us one of the things that Kipling did not relate about camels. When tired camels after a forced march have to cross a shallow muddy creek in the dark they immediately lie down and wallow in it. The sulky camel boy said that all camels always did. When we pulled his ear and demanded why he had not imparted this knowledge to us during the half-hour that we fought to beat the brutes into the water, he became only sulkier and said nothing more at all.

We have wondered since then how the camel that had the bed-rolls knew where to find the deepest mud in the dark.

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First days on trek, it seems, are never good days. There lives not the person who can accumulate sufficient experience to guard against all the possibilities of trouble. The amazing talent of the African boy for demoniac dumbness is too diversified.

The only ray of sunshine during that day was that I got a long shot at a greater bustard before the dark enveloped us; and greater bustard is about forty pounds of the best bird meat in Africa.

But there was eventually a volcano and a lake. Though all the koodoo and most of the beestes and many of the boks had been transformed by witchcraft into hippopotami. The *anus* who were the watchers over the welfare of those beasts had done this thing to us. They knew that we didn't want to murder any more fat water pigs for the sake of umbrella-stands and tea-tables, so they had just turned the simple trick on us.

So old Desta was convinced. Though I remained skeptical about the miracle. To me the marvel was that so much and such persistent misinformation was dealt out to apparently everybody about the interior of the country by nearly everybody else. Out of experience comes the knowledge that few people know anything about the interior at first hand, and that everybody feels qualified to pass on second-hand information, with the seriousness of gospel, to the newcomer who has not yet learned enough about the ropes to take the information at a 90 per cent. evaluation.

Justice impels me, in this respect, to make the comment that many people who undoubtedly do know

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facts lack entirely the faculty of conveying them with any degree of clarity. I have met old-timers, men who have traveled the country since the days of Menelek, who have been and seen with their own eyes; and who have given me descriptions of routes and conditions which have proved to be so hazy, so actually inaccurate that, had I not had proof, I would have doubted that the informants had ever been out of the city.

I am inclined to believe that my old-timer of the hotel veranda was not deliberately bamboozling a tenderfoot; but that he had shot so many animals during his various wanderings that his memory was hazy as to exact localities. Or that, perhaps, he had spent a day once long ago at this old volcano, and that it so happened that just at that time the mysterious migrations of the wild creatures in search of good grazing had centered a herd or two of beasts there; on the strength of which he imparted the secret that this place was infested with a variety of game all the time.

Let the traveler be wary of such old-timers.

Had I but been the wiser type of expeditionist who collects his data in a note-book from the hotel veranda and then supplies the necessary dramatic detail, I might now have had material for all the hunting stories I required.

There remains, of course, the counter-suggestion that I am a very, very poor specimen of a mighty hunter; that I am clumsy-footed, unobservant, and short-sighted—which latter I am, due to overstudy of travel books—and that the real mighty hunters go

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forth and decimate the fauna of plain and mountain-side. A fat-head, I, predestined to failure.

I admit the suggestion with no abashment. So does my lady. She records herewith the failure of her cherished hope of lasting beauty as well as of vast financial profit.

The "Bleachem" anti-freckle lotion came to its inevitable end. It was bound to. One cannot carry bottles on camel caravan. The cider vinegar had long since smashed. The alcohol for collecting bugs for the museum had gone into thin air. The half-gallon of citronella had de-mosquitoed a past landscape. And now the priceless "Bleachem" had been bashed.

I don't know how. It had been packed with tender solicitude wedged in among the softest lingers. But camels have a beastly way of just humping themselves, and things break. My theory is that, in the continual jumble of packing, the bottle had just wormed its way out of its lingers and snuggled up against something lumpy, as bottles love to do when not watched—as many a traveler to Montreal knows. And my lady had certainly been growing disgracefully callous about freckles.

But the loss was a blow none the less. Gone long since was the La Belle cold cream. And here went one more chance of the rotogravure picture with the remunerative title: "Famous Exploress attributed her beauty to Bleachem."

All hopes hung now upon the "Eatmor" lipstick. But in the strenuous environment of camp one can-

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not weep for too long. My lady would make up for freckles with trophies of the chase. Accompanied by wise old Desta, we made a series of futile trips up the sides of that wretched volcano, enacting the rôle of excelsior. For we had decided by now that we didn't want a hippopotamus hide tea-table; but we did want a fine pair of koodoo horns to go over the fireplace.

Around the volcano base were sparse villages of Ogaden Gallas, hospitable souls who brought smoked milk in gourds, which, quite aside from its sepulchral taste, we were afraid to drink because at least half of these people seemed to be suffering from *chorassu*, which is the local name for *yickuk*, that vicious first cousin of the scabies bug.

They told us, oh, yes, there were plenty of koodoo on the slopes; but higher up. An hour or so higher up there were decrepit huts of lean upland Gallas, two thirds of whom had *yickuk*, and who told us that koodoo were plentiful; but higher up. Another two hours higher were the wind shelters of the goatherd boys, all of whom had the *yickuk*, and who said that the koodoo were still higher.

The reason that the herd boys were no higher themselves was because nothing grew that they could eat. We couldn't believe that koodoo ate ancient lava detritus, so we never went to see if there really were any.

CHAPTER XVII

BIG GAME

It would be unjust to say that there is no big hunting in Africa. Nothing is further from my desire than to convey the impression that the slaying of big game is only for those fortunate travelers who can go out with an expensive expedition.

One day the Zeiss glasses picked up a black spot on a far hillside. I looked at it with long deliberation. We refocused the glasses and my lady looked at most of the landscape and finally at it. We gave the glasses to old Desta with the correct end to his eyes and he looked at it. Finally.

"*Khifaru*," he said.

That was a Swahili word he had picked up somewhere. Old Desta spoke to us in Amharic, Galla, French, Somali, and English. So we very often knew exactly what he meant. Out of my African classics I had long ago learned words like *khifaru* and *baas* and *simba* and *shenzi* and all the rest of the familiar list. I knew that *khifaru* meant rhinoceros.

Everything, therefore, was immediate excitement. Now the gods, of course, grant luck to their real devotees. A top-notch mighty hunter might have had

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that rhinoceros in a quite easily accessible place. A very, very poor specimen of one could not hope for so much. The black spot had taken the precaution to browse on a low slope on the farther side of the largest of the three lakes.

The shores of this lake were covered, for as far out as it flooded in the rainy season, with a dense mat of brush—low scrub, wire grass, thorny vines. Solid miles of them. So we decided, of course, to paddle across the lake in our "aircraft," our inflatable rubber boat. The most important member of the expedition was not very keen on doing it that way at first. She felt that a crocodile could so easily bite a hole in the big rubber tire. But I reminded her that, pooh, pooh, she needn't be so nervous, because that man who had given us this splendid tip about the lake had told us there were no crocodiles.

So in the inflated tire we set forth, and old Desta waved us a gloomy farewell with three twisted fingers. And in due course we began, all safe and sound, to reach the farther shore. On that side an ancient lava flow had broken up the shore into the most picturesque peaks and pinnacles, upon which cormorants and spoonbills and brown geese posed and preened themselves.

I was enjoying these with an artist's delight. So that, quite properly, I rowed on to a jagged pinnacle of lava just awash. My lady naturally squealed.

I, *very* naturally, swore with instant presence of mind and managed to joggle our craft free.

And then I suddenly bent to it and rowed. Water

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was coming in. Only a trickle—though my big game huntress moaned dismally about sitting in the rising wet. But I set my ears back and pulled hard. So that we rowed well on to another sunken pinnacle. Though I managed to get frantically off that one without another hole. An oblong rubber tire is not easy rowing, but I set my teeth and threw a bow wave like a Hudson River ferry-boat; and our next bump was soft, shelving black mud, a hundred feet from the shore.

Out I leapt, my haste urging my wet lady to undignified speed, and we sloshed through the sinking ooze to dry—and safe—land. And then my indignant and out-of-breath partner turned upon me and complained that the hole was not so big after all; that not so much water had come in as she had thought way out there; and that there hadn't really been any need for such a hurry, and particularly not so much swearful flurry.

But this time the final triumphant word was mine. This time my lady had to admit that my swift judgment had been flawless from the very beginning of the spurt. For, as I told her, just as we shoved off that first pinnacle, I had seen, just beyond her back, a great weed-grown chunk—a hundred feet long at least—of dead, scaly lava formation wake up and scuttle into the water, throwing a bow wave a lot bigger than did our boat at its best. Then she had a qualm. I had already had mine when we struck on that second pinnacle.

But, anyhow, I don't believe that a crocodile would bite a hole in a rubber boat.

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It was this episode chiefly that called forth my spiteful remarks about the misinformation given out by hotel veranda hunters.

However, there we were. Not exactly at the point for which we had been aiming, where with the glasses I had picked out a few open patches in the surrounding tangle that gave hope of a possible approach to our black spot. But we were, at least, on that shore.

We chose our heaviest loads for our rifles. My lady had the Savage .30 with a 180-grain bullet and I had a sporting model Springfield .30-06 with a splendid load of 220 grains put up by the Western Arms Company. Both a bit light for heavy game. But, since we did not belong to the fortunate class of expeditionists who buy their guns in Europe, it was the best we had. And, well—rhinoceroses, and even elephants, have been killed many a time with less.

So we took a good sight of our direction and pushed our way into the brush tangle, and emerged almost immediately into a maze of winding hippo paths—wide swaths, well trampled and easy going—until our backs broke from stooping; for a hippo doesn't build his tunnels more than four feet high. And what a labyrinth!

No shame comes to me in admitting that we lost our way in the aimless wandering of those beasts. We knew, we thought, where we ought to go, and we ducked along a tunnel that went that way and then wound another way and then crossed two other tunnels that looked as though they might go our way but later on changed their minds. Occasional glades

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of grass stamped flat showed us tree-tops that we thought we remembered and set us off down new tunnels, which went direct, we were sure, to our black spot—and then crossed a tunnel we knew for a certainty because of our boot-tracks. We felt distinctly glad to find boot-tracks by means of which we would at least be able to get out of that skyless mess of back-breaking steam pipes. What steamily moist dens those tunnels were!

But even hippo paths eventually come into the open; for the great beasts sometimes go on long roaming moonlight walks across country looking for newer grass. We spent all of two hours in that maze before a crooked tunnel opened out suddenly into sunlight; and there we were in the open, beyond that ghastly fringe of brush tangle, and our objective point lay not more than half a mile to our right.

We ran a quarter mile. We walked fast for three hundred yards. We crept forward for a hundred more. And we crawled on our stomachs for forty more.

And we never knew how long ago our black spot had gone away from that place.

But we did get close enough to see its tracks.

Yet some of those hotel veranda naturalists have told me rhinoceros-hunting stories that, with only a little dramatic assistance, would *make the most fascinating* books.

A quite nice little story is to be recounted about two of our camp boys. Our aircraft had always been a thing

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of wonder and admiration to them. A rubber boat that one could carry in one's hand and fill with air that didn't have to be carried at all and forthwith cross rivers intrigued them immensely.

With the queer aloofness of camp boys, they didn't come and ask to be initiated into the mysteries. But they waited till master and missus—I should say, missus and master—were away, hunting for their insatiable stomachs. Then with monkey imitativeness they pumped the great tire full of air, carried it to the water's edge, and two of them gaily embarked, the envy of the others who had not drawn the first lot.

Be it noted that missus and master had not thought to impart to them the information that crocodiles, despite all yarns to the contrary, did exist on the farther side of this lake. Neither had missus and master imparted to them the important knowledge that the air valve of this rubber boat was no more leak-proof than any automobile tire valve, and that a little screw cap was needed to make it tight.

So the voyagers had progressed but a little distance out upon the clammy deep when they found the fat tire growing visibly thinner and flabbier and fast losing the buoyancy with which it had so lightly set out.

Imitating monkeys again, they immediately lost their heads. They paddled this way and that, against each other, in circles; they splashed more water into the boat than was slopping over the deflating edges; and they yelled. The boys on shore with swift presence

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of mind came to their assistance by yelling in unison. Heavens, how they yelled!

And then the crocodiles came. Out of the blue lake. Not a saurian had been seen on this side of the lake before. But, just as a big Florida alligator will appear out of nowhere when a dog splashes about in the water, barking, so these long, lean crocodiles appeared out of nowhere, and hungrily they circled the boat.

If those boys had yelled before, they shrieked all hell's pandemonium now. So that missus and master and old Desta, returning from their foray with a meda-fiel, a small kind of buck, heard the hullabaloo and dropped the buck and came hotfoot.

Which was just about in good time. Both master—first this time, because he shot faster—and missus were kept right busy for some fifteen minutes taking snap shots at every lean green head that showed just under the water's surface; till the twin adventurers, greener than the crocodiles, floundered ashore.

It is to be reported that admiration for that rubber boat fell several points that day. Also, that some sneaky beast that left tracks like a Bengal-tiger came while the boy monkeys were being saved and carried the meda-fiel clean away.

While recounting flat failures, another instance is worthy of record.

A museum of my acquaintance wanted a "specimen" of an aardvark very much indeed. When a museum says specimen, it means a skin that has been peeled and preserved and packed according to certain scientific

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formulæ. No mere layman knows how to prepare a skin for modern taxidermy. So my museum had imparted the secret to me in order that it might have its aardvark.

An aardvark is that queer nocturnal ant-eater beast that has ears like a mule and a nose like a pig and a body like a huge Belgian hare and a tail like a kangaroo, and that digs like a steam shovel. It is the beast that makes those gaping tunnels that one sees at the base of every second termite mound in Abyssinia. But it is so excessively nocturnal that museums sit up and beg for specimens.

So I was going to shoot me an aardvark and prepare the rare specimen for my museum. I had it all promised in advance. Old Desta, after much careful watching and tracking, announced that he had mapped out the route of one of these wily beasts. In such and such a locality—in a regular warren of holes—it lived, and at about such a time it came out, and its customary direction was thus and thus.

So we went out and sat up for it the selfsame night. And most of the hyenas in North Africa came to investigate us; and we didn't dare even to shout at them on account of the abnormal hearing of our earth pig, which, when it hears as much as the footfall of a hyena, ducks into one of the innumerable ant-hill burrows and stays there, it seems, for at least three days before it will venture out again.

We threw pebbles at the hyenas and made faces at them to keep them at their distance. And finally an aardvark did come along. *Ka-lopp, ka-lopp, ka-lopp,*

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we could hear its thick feet advancing like a vast rabbit. We held our very breaths; and the thing flopped along—and passed—a dim shape, not thirty yards from us.

And the night was so pit-dark that I couldn't see my rifle sights. And all the other nights whenever aardvarks hopped abroad were pit-black. Wherefore, I propound the question to all our leading gun-stores. Why does there not exist a good and efficient night sight for a modern rifle? Or, if such a boon does exist, why is it not internationally advertised, or, at least, to be found in our large sporting-goods stores?

There are gadgets of various sorts, I know. Polished bulbs and aluminum beads and patent clip holders for triangular bits of white paper, and so on. But all of them rely upon making the most of such faint sky reflections as there may be. Let their inventors try to use them on a pit-black African night when the sky is blanketed thick with the clouds getting ready for their big monsoon burst.

And let not any helpful savant tell me about luminous paint. I have two bottles of it—splendid stuff for illuminating the numbers on a house-door, but a pin point lost in the darkness on the bead of a front sight.

Why, I wonder, has no inventor of gun gadgets produced something on the principle of a radiolite watch? Some simple clip arrangement that could be snapped on, front and rear? The thing seems to be so simple that possibly there are optical difficulties in the way. Possibly the rear sight glow would cloud the

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front. But it would seem that a thin circle on the principle of a large peep would allow a sufficiently clear view of a heavier front sight. If anything of the sort exists, why have I not been able to buy it at a New York gunsmith's?

Now let some observant reader ask what do I expect to see beyond so luminous a sight on a pit-black night when the existing patents are useless? My answer is that one can see moving game, shadows on the sky-line, bulks against the sheen of still water, eyes in the blackness under bushes, when one can't see one's own hand, let alone the front sight end of a rifle. It is more than once, too, that I have wished I could see to shoot at a stealthy sound. I leave it to the mighty hunters to snap up their rifles to their accustomed shoulders and to shoot by the feel of the butt against the cheek.

If I demand too great a miracle in a sighting gadget, let me be excused on the ground that lack of such a thing caused my failure to elevate my expedition to the dignity of those that bring home something to further the advancement of science.

With time and with moonlight I might finally have succeeded in becoming a patron of science. But heavy night showers began to remind us that the "big rains" were slowly and surely on their way; and, what was more unfortunate, began to remind the camp crew that the home trail was due.

This chapter is going to have the merit of being unlike any chapter in any other book. For it records

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nothing but the failures of the heroic expeditionists. The foregoing fozzles have been matters of little importance; trifling incidents of travel. But the incident about to be reported was a grave affair that put the final lid upon the last hope of remunerative roto-gravures.

It happened in this wise. There came to our camp an earnest youth, a borderland Galla, who wanted to know whether the Frangis could let him have the teeniest bit of paint. Almost any kind of paint would do, but yellow, or better still red, would be his preference.

Why did he so earnestly require paint? Oh, because he had chosen the maid of his choice and life was empty without her. But since this was the most wonderful maid in all the land, quite different from the ordinary ruck of young women, no common ceremony would do; he wanted to make his marriage an affair of a proper prestige. Therefore, if he could but get hold of some paint, good red paint, he would have the witch doctor paint him the mystic stripe down the center of his forehead which would endow him with cunning; and the two stripes across his breast which would give him lung-power and courage; and the stripe on each thigh that would give him speed of foot; and the stripe on each shoulder which would give him strength of arm. Thus armed, he would go forth alone with his spear and would get his man. If the paint were good and the witch doctor did his job right, he might gather in a Somali.

Now I was immediately in strong sympathy with

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any plan to kill a Somali. But my lady demurred. So drastic a method of getting married was not to be encouraged; and anyhow, how did we know that this maid was worthy of all this coöperation?

So the earnest youth immediately offered with eagerness to go and fetch the girl and we would see if she were not the most wonderful, etc., etc. So does illusioned youth rave the world over.

However, there was of course no paint in our camp. So in order to put him off, we rallied the youth about having to see before we could believe that so much perfection existed. And, hanged if the boy, being a very earnest youth indeed, didn't go off and return half a day later with his chosen mate. All dressed up in Mother Eve's borrowed Sunday clothes, too.

And she was the comeliest, laughing young thing. She giggled with open candor at everybody and everything, while her serious-minded jealous lover scowled ferociously at everybody and everything.

Here stood romance before us; pure, primeval mating instinct, hand in hand. And where lives the woman who would not willingly sacrifice time and energy and personal goods toward speeding a wedding on its glamorous way?

We had, as I have said, no paint. But my lady murmured "Isn't she the dearest thing?" And she stole into the tent and rummaged—a long while, for the thing was long since mislaid. And she emerged presently and conferred upon the earnest lover a priceless boon. No less than her vivid carmine lip-stick!

In this matter I take no blame—except that, since

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the youth hankered after Somalis, I would have given him a quart of paint had I had it. But there is the feminine of it. All in one swift generous impulse she sacrificed her last hope of breaking into the Sunday supplements under the auspices of the "Eatmor" lipstick publicity agent.

It must have been one of those very good kiss-proof lip-sticks too. For the proud youth came back afterward and strutted before us, mystically striped with all the manly aids to murder; and it rained horribly upon him, but the stuff held with splendid tenacity.

I wonder whether he ever got his Somali. We couldn't wait to find out. For the camp crew was restive under the rain to the point of mutiny.

I have forgotten to report that the camel boy had run away long ago. By night, silently, and with all of his smelly beasts. Had it not happened to me I would not have believed that camels could be got under way with so little noise. At all other times they have bubbled and howled and roared like tortured fiends from the moment that the hobbles were slipped from their knees. But on this occasion the flight was consummated without waking a soul in the camp. Morning came and the beasts were gone. That was all.

I can understand that line now about they "Shall fold their tents like the Arabs, And as silently steal away." Before that I was convinced that an Arab could do nothing without first making a lot of loud noise about it.

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The method of hobbling a camel, incidentally, is an interesting provision of nature for controlling an unruly beast. The front knees of the brute have been specially designed loose-jointed so that it can kick out without warning in any direction. But it can also, therefore, bend back so that the leg folds upon itself as completely as a jack-knife. So all that the camel-driver has to do is to beat his beast to kneel and then slip a circlet of rope over the doubled-up limb. And there the ungainly thing must squat, manacled as safely as in irons, and howl the night through.

There is another way too, which one sees in the camel market. This is to tie the nose rope to a ridiculous peg of eight or ten inches in length, push the peg into the ground, then beat the camel as a warning and tell it that it is securely tied. And it is astonishing for how long the foolish beast will believe it. But this method is not so good for a night fastening, when the brute's gentle tentative tugs at its rope will not bring a whirlwind of yelling master and stick about its ears. Left to itself, it will eventually root out its feeble peg and will go on the prowl to feast on cactuses and tent pegs and green canvas duffle bags. Until it flounders in among the tent ropes; and then the whole camp must wake up to hear about it.

The camel boy's flight was sufficient to start the slow current of ideas in our camp boys' heads. They began to be restive. The rain was coming and all the ills of the monsoon would be upon them. And there we sat, deserted by our pack transport.

It is a contretemps such as this that renders Afri-

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can explorers so callous to the thought of taking human life.

But good old Desta went a-journeying among the surrounding villages and bought a bony horse here and a mule there and supplemented with sturdy little donkeys; and we loaded up a heterogeneous caravan and made a long slant to the northwestward which would, it is true, necessitate crossing the Hawash River, but which would be a short cut if we could get across. We were emboldened to this move because we felt that, even if the river had already risen, we could ferry ourselves and our baggage across in our marvelous rubber tire and could swim the animals. Though we didn't impart this thought to the camp crew, for fear that they would make an awful fuss about it.

And the Hawash River *had* risen and we *did* have to ferry across and the boys *did* make a most colossal fuss. But if they wouldn't ferry ride they would have to stay behind; so they had their terrors and their tremors, but they came. And they all swore they would leave us; this was inhuman traveling; never did decent expeditions go forth in such crazy manner.

We jested with them. We passed the merry quip to put them to shame for their fears. We told them that this was but the beginning of wet travel; that we proposed to go, not straight home, but back into another part of the Ogaden district where the hunting was very fine and where the slow advancing monsoon did not come for a couple of weeks yet; and when the rain finally drove us home to shelter we would all

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come home together and ferry triumphantly across innumerable little gullies in our wonderful rubber boat.

Let the traveler in Africa be warned. Let him mark this down in his red tagged note-book. Never, under any circumstances, attempt to put over a white man's idea of humor upon an African boy.

Our boys grinned sheepishly. All was well, we thought. They were a little timid about fast water, but they were good lads.

And that night they fled, four of them. They were Arussi Gallas; and on the north shore of the Hawash were their own tribesmen. They were safe, almost at home. So the fear of the terrible rubber boat loomed large before them and they softly faded out of the picture.

We were left with just our faithful mission boy and with good old Desta.

Once again that mission boy must have had a telepathic insight into our minds. For he was so utterly useless in the field that we had once again decided to fire him when we got home. Once again, therefore, his faithfulness saved him his job. But he was wise enough, contemplating the prospect of fourfold work, to lie right down and groan with his frightful sickness that attacked him in the head and in the back and in the belly.

As for stanch old Desta, he told us with a lift of his head:

"An Amhara warrior does not get sick nor ever run away."

I have often wondered how our own hardy pros-

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pectors can go out alone, or perhaps a pair of them, with ten or a dozen burro-loads of mining gear and food for a six months' sojourn in the mountains. In Africa the standard proportion is one driver to every three animals. Boys will positively not hire out for less. And since I have helped to herd the animals, I can hardly see how they could.

Pack mules are bad enough; but donkeys are worse. Mules, at least, are supposed to follow a lead horse. Of course they don't, any more than they want to. They wander and stop and feed and break back unless driven ceaselessly and all the time. It is all of one boy's job to attend to three of them. Donkeys have much the same characteristics, only much worse, and there must be many more of them for the same load.

The multiplication table of trek runs: Four camel-loads equal eight big horses. Eight horses equal twelve mules. Twelve mules equal thirty-six donkeys. So our heterogeneous fleet consisted of twenty-three animals.

Even our tireless old Desta shrank from the thought of attempting to continue our trek without boys. So he went scouting once more among the Arussi villages to recruit help. It would be easy here, he told us; for one of his hunting lodges was not very far off on the other side of the river and he was a person of some consequence in the locality. But all the wide district of Arussi, it seemed, had known instantly that travelers were stuck and in need of help. All of a sudden every able-bodied man in the district was urgently needed for plowing. The permanent rain might come any day

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now, and a day lost would have frightful and far-reaching results. Fields unplowed. Seed unsown. Loss of crops. Famine!

All to the effect that high-priced labor would cost three times as much as it should. That is to say, fifty cents per man for the two days' trek to the railroad.

Well, what is the traveler for but to pay out money? Whether to a gang of skin-clad robbers to conduct a fleet of pack animals, or to a silk-clad syndicate that conducts a fleet of steamships? So we submitted; and it was immediately astonishing how many people were cheerfully ready to risk rain upon fields unplowed and the consequent famine. Hired help came in cheerful multitudes. The sick boy miraculously recovered. We loaded up, bade a regretful farewell to our good Desta, to whom *we* gave *my* hunting knife as a memento, and rode forth.

And within ten minutes the whole caravan was lost.

We had ridden not two hundred yards ahead. We had looked back before taking a turn in the trail and had seen the leading animals coming along. Ten minutes later, remembering our past experience, we thought we had better wait. Nothing came round the bend. We waited no longer. We rode right back. And empty wilderness, dripping with rain drops and sun, smiled joyously at us.

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GONE was the caravan. Gone was our lone remaining boy with it. Gone was Atto Desta.

Gone were the natives who had stood around helping their hired fellows with good advice. Monarchs were we of all we surveyed and solitude had no charms at all.

Of course there were tracks leading off in the general direction of our destination. The heavy rainy season was coming and all the country-side was littered up with tracks of every native who had a last load of grain to deliver at the railroad. Deep tracks of loaded animals.

Shoe-tracks, came the thought to us. Our much civilized mission boy wore ponderous native sandals studded with a pattern of great hobnails. We could have trailed those feet across all Africa.

But we cursed our own stupid tender-heartedness in impotent rage. At least, I did. My lady was too busy reviewing in her mind the pleasing prospect of another night with the hyenas under a fig-tree in the rain. Feeling for that wretched boy's sickness, which we were not diagnosticians enough to be sure of, we had

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let ourselves be bluffed into hiring a horse for him to ride. And none of all those beasts, as far as we knew, was lame or had only three legs or any other useful distinguishing trait.

Later on, when we finally got back to the capital, I sent that boy to the American Mission hospital; and there he luxuriated in a clean white bed while American nurses ministered to him and American physicians pondered upon his mysterious pain. It was not till they talked within his hearing about the seriousness of his case, and decided that the only thing to do would be to dissect out his stomach and replace it with a healthy goat's stomach, that he got up swiftly and went away.

But that was much later. There, at the Hawash, we had no time to speculate upon anything except that it must have been raining cats and dogs in the hills; for the river was coming down like a flume, rising inches as we watched. There was another, smaller river about an hour's fast ride from there, which the caravan would have to cross in order to reach the railroad. We hoped that it had been raining sheep and buffaloes up in its hills and that it would stop the caravan dead at the ford.

For that ford we rode. But we edged a little too much to our left, following a well-defined trail. And when we reached the river we found—with sinking hearts and a vast void at the pits of our stomachs—that there was a ford there too, and that, while deep, the measly little river was crossable.

Of course, there must be other fords too. Which

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one would our caravan take? We couldn't patrol a couple of miles of river front to lay in wait and catch it as its controlling demon of perversity sneaked it across.

We had just two courses open, either one as pleasing as the other. One was to loiter along the river bank until it was so late that we would be sure the caravan had crossed, and then to start for the railroad with a vague hope of overtaking it. The prospect held out all the joy of trying to follow a trail through thorn bush into the coming night without lanterns. The other course was Desta's hunting lodge. We knew that village and the hut that he owned in it. From there a good day's ride, unencumbered by pack animals, would bring us to the railroad. At Desta's would be hospitality, food, shelter. All on the other side of the Hawash River.

We chose the Hawash in unhesitating preference to the thorn bush. We knew a place where we had seen a dugout canoe, and we prayed during the whole of our hour's hard ride that it might still be there. At least my lady did. I was too busy reviewing in my mind the pleasing prospect of all the things I could say to that boy when I fired him.

We reached the river without delay or incident, other than trying a short cut and coming out half a mile above the place where we had seen the dugout canoe—which is not bad bush navigation. But has it ever happened to any reader to debouch on a river, thick bush on either side, and not to know whether one is above or below the desired point?

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At first thought it would seem that, having found a river, one would just have to follow it and presently arrive at one's destination. But how to know whether to follow down or up?

Dark as pea soup was the flood of the Hawash rolling rapidly. But what signs does running water give of where it has been or where it is going? Soap suds? Factory chemicals? Camp *débris*? The Hawash had never known any of these things. And the sun was low enough to preclude flipping a coin and taking a chance one way or the other. We didn't know that our deviation and drift had been only a mile.

But the gods of the rain relented for a moment and sent us a sign. Two crocodiles, youngish to middling; that is to say, about five feet long apiece. From them we reasoned our course after the manner of dyed-in-the-wool explorers. We knew that for quite a way below the place of the dugout the bush was full of hidden Arussi villages. The river, therefore, would be intersected at several points with the drinking-places of their cattle; and in dry weather there were two or three fords. Well, five-foot crocodiles are too small to snatch any benefit from lying up at fords, and the cattle scare away the fish on which they feed. Therefore, said we, our young crocodiles must be above the place of the canoe; and we struck off down-river.

We were more than merely flattered to find the canoe within the half-hour; and relieved to the point of tears—three fourths of us—to find a man with a paddle sitting in it—even though he spoke only Arussi

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Galla and was on the other side of much turbulent water.

We screamed at him and he screamed back at us—and budged never an inch. Much more screaming slowly got it into our understanding that the bandit was bargaining for his price before he undertook any strenuous measures; and that his price for ferrying wealthy travelers was fifty cents in money. No cartridges did this civilized brigand want.

So we promised; and he came across—and insisted on collecting his money first. It was not a comfortable ferry. A dugout canoe, loaded with three people and two saddles and the precious guns, and dragging a mule and a horse swimming alongside, is a finicky sort of thing in fast water. But the favor of the rain gods continued with us, and the passage was consummated. The bandit was so surprised at his success that he asked for backsheesh; and we were so surprised that we gave him two and a half cents. We also gave heartfelt thanks to multifarious gods. To be alone in the trackless wastes without all the manifold luxuries of caravan is no sort of a situation for hardy expeditionists to be in. We saddled up with speed and made Desta's village before sundown; and the old boy was so surprised at our sudden appearance before his hut that he forgot to offer us hospitality and we had to ask for supper. Then he apologized with vast embarrassment and routed out his whole village to supply us with its very best. And then he laid table.

Two flat baskets, black from disinfection in smoke and shiny with polished grease. It was good that the

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hut was too dark to permit of close examination into the interstices between the crossed fibers—which were pretty well filled up and well slicked from long use anyway. Out of a treasure bag like a witch doctor's came the guest silver; a battered enamel plate, a huge spoon and two table knives, all without handles. These were all for pure swank. One ate off the baskets with one's hands, of course.

The village's best took some little time to prepare. But it was quite the best when it came. Corn bread and roasted last season's corn and horse gram. Hot milk, too, in a freshly smoked gourd and—*pièce de résistance*—boiled catfish in a black earthen pot; old, old catfish that we had left in our camp. The fare of visiting chiefs, no less—though one of the women who brought in the repast scratched uncomfortably with the *yickuk* itch.

After that it was bedtime; and once again we were constrained to feel that our friend Desta was failing in the best manners of a host. He went out and fetched in our horse blankets, all damp from our hard riding—how I hate the smell of hot horse!—and he gave us back a dry blanket; one that we had given him as a backsheesh and the only one he possessed. But after that it seemed that he felt he had sacrificed enough. He swept a place clean for us on the floor where the roof didn't leak. For which same reason a rooster and two hens had chosen a beam there for their bedroom.

We, with our inhibitions of civilization, felt that we should assert ourselves. We said right out that

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there was nothing doing on the mud floor, because we knew that the huge Arussi fleas flourished in the warm dust of such floors. We would sleep in the bed. There was a bed, a sort of cradle of crooked sticks and twigs covered with hay. Desta meekly removed the litter of his belongings from the bed and then unrolled his own painted bullhide in what was clearly his customary corner of the floor. It seemed that he never slept in his bed.

We were glad to let the cowdung fire die out and to rest our smarting eyes while we slept. And in ten minutes we knew why Desta slept among the fleas on the floor.

It was a burning sensation, first at the wrists and neck. Something like the little red ants, but not localized as to each separate bite. It was just an all-pervading red-hot smart. The dim glow of the dung fire was useless to hunt and try to catch anything. Desta, of course, possessed neither lantern nor matches. And the things, whatever they were, spread up our arms and down our backs. Desta heard us talking to them—heard me, says my lady—and he woke up and said yes, he couldn't stand it himself and that was why he slept on the floor. Then he muttered that he was a poor man with but a poor house, but it was the best he had in that village, and therewith went to sleep again.

But not so we. We sat on the floor with the friendly fleas and scratched ourselves; and when our bones ached we lay down and scratched ourselves. Then the cold rain came and we blew up the last spark of the fire and added more dry cattle chips and scratched

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ourselves. The rain passed and a thin beginning of a moon flickered between scurrying clouds; and the rooster kept thinking day was breaking and screamed its steam whistle call to each cloud; and we cursed it and scratched ourselves.

I don't know to this day which of Egypt's plagues persisted in that bed. The physicians of the American Mission hospital don't know either. Another wanderer in the Arussi told us afterward that he had met the things too. They were tiny, black, almost microscopic lice. But I know all the kinds of cooties. None of them act that way. I have a hope, some day, of baiting such a trap with an unruly servant who deserves punishment and of bringing home samples in a vial of alcohol to my good friend Dr. Mann, entomologist of the Smithsonian Institution, who knows everything.

But that must be when I have means at hand to make brilliant light for the hunting. With the morning the pests and their burning itch were gone. With the first sunrise we faced the river once more—no lying and stretching in luxury this morning. We stood betimes at the crossing. But the ferry bandit was not there. Desta hammered at the door of his hut. A feeble moan came forth from within. The man was very sick indeed. He could not by any stretch of possibility ferry us across that day.

We stood aghast. But Desta made a face at us and grinned, and we understood immediately.

All right, we said, we were very sorry he was sick; but we couldn't wait; so we would paddle across ourselves and swim our beasts, just as we had seen him do

the day before; and Desta would pull the dugout back with a string. So then the bandit came out and ferried us across himself.

After that it was just a matter of riding. With evening we sighted the railroad. And sighted, too, our faithful mission boy sitting on top of all our baggage and looking very dejected. What could we say or do, then, of all the things we had planned, to that foolish faithful youth when we realized that he might just as well have syndicated with those wild tribesmen on the loot and never have come back at all? Except to give him a backsheesh.

There was news at the railroad. A hurrying down the line of important British officials, very stiff and stern and on sacred duty bent. The tail of the British lion had been badly twisted, and investigations and indemnities were very swiftly due.

The wealthy expedition of the titled Englishman and the Indian potentate had come to sudden and serious grief. There had been bickering and blows. "An unprovoked attack," the official report said. "Fifty men had been killed," rumor said. It was difficult to get anything coherent; but it was definite that the great hunting expedition had got into the Ogaden district with all its mules and its servants and its armed retainers; and the fracas, whatever it was, had been serious enough to break it up. It had been abandoned; and the titled Englishman and the Indian potentate were in retreat to the nearest point on the railroad; and the important British officials were on their way down to meet them and to learn the true state of

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affairs; and then somebody would jolly well have to pay the bally old bill.

Now I had been feeling all along that, as a fearless expeditionist into the wilds of Africa, I had been going through the very tamest sort of traveling. Nothing had happened to me anything at all like the stories that the hotel veranda old-timers told. But here was something real. Border raids and sudden death within but a few days' march of where I had just been. Here was fascinating book material, with all the dramatic incident written in already. And besides, it was right in that hunting paradise where I had been proposing to go before the rain drowned it. I felt like a war correspondent; suffocated with the hurry and the impossibility of doing anything. My inquiries were met with the same derision meted out to a war correspondent's importunities.

I wanted to go down into that death-laden district, without even passports, and in the face of the rainy season . . . and I wanted caravan boys to come with me? Ha, ha! that was a funny one. Did I know any more jokes?

The African, perhaps, can put more scorn into his derision than even the Oriental. Possibly because he is so blatantly loud about it.

But counsel and assistance came from a German exile who was developing a fruit farm at that place. There was a friend of his, he said, another post-war exile from German East, who was now trying to raise coffee on his holding down on the Ogaden border. I could reach this man by railroad and a day's ride;

and he would outfit me with boys and animals for a trek into the exciting district. My *frau* could, in the meanwhile, stay with his *frau* and learn how to cook toothsome dishes out of the meager products of the bush.

This good farmer, as I have said, was German; and he had the courage and the hereditary precedent of his sturdy race for deciding upon the movements of the *frau* without first consulting her. Our American precedent is, however, quite different. Noncommittally I consulted over the possibilities with my lady; and *her* decision was that she was tired, for the nonce, of trek and sore from much riding, and that a few days' rest and hot baths would be a good thing. So I had permission to go alone this time, and mind I got back before the rain reached that district in earnest. So to the farther outlying pioneer I hied me in quest of fascinating book material.

There are many of these sturdy pioneers in Abyssinia. The war took away everything they had in German East and repatriated them. But the lure of the new places was in their blood and they could never settle down at home. So they came out again to Abyssinia, the new land of opportunity that they had always heard about to the north of themselves.

On the plea of just a short railway journey, my good farmer friend found me two new camp boys and with his own hands shoved them into the train along with a tent and a minimum of camp gear. It would be up to me to see, when I started into the wicked Ogaden, that they didn't escape. I paid their fares to the con-

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ductor and felt that I had circumvented the African boy and was well on my way.

It was but a couple of hours' ride. It was evening when the train arrived at the square stone hut with the loopholed walls that was my jumping-off place. I jumped off accordingly and waited for my new boys to come and unload the camp gear; for no red-capped porters wait at Abyssinian wayside stations. Then I yelled for my new boys. Then I sent the conductor to tell the fools that this was where they got off.

After a long wait there appeared only my Foolish Faithful; and he gave me the news that the genus boy had once again circumvented me by both jumping off the train at the very next station after they had got on. Then he groaned and was seized with a terrible pain in the head and lay down and was sick, physically. I don't know how he did it. I got my baggage off myself.

The train pulled out, and in a moment hid itself in its own dust. The rain had not reached this district yet. A scurvy dog came and sniffed at my sick boy and, finding that he was not dead, went away again. A tame ostrich waltzed drunkenly down the track in pursuit of the train. The sun swelled red behind the supper smoke from the roofs of a straggly collection of distant huts. Three fuzzy Ogaden Somalis leaned upon their spears and grinned at me. That was all.

I tried to get them to understand that I wanted to have my piled camp gear moved off the road bed. They only grinned some more and said something to each other and laughed. I showed them money and smiled to indicate that I wanted to deal on a just and friendly

basis. Their noses wrinkled and their lips curled like hostile dogs. Not that they didn't like money or were not at that moment wondering how they might murder me to steal it; but they would rather show their independence to the lone Frangi who needed a little assistance.

As of all people the African, so of all Africans the Somali has the faculty of putting more contempt into his derision than any other.

Many men have written of the insufferable insolence of the Somali; and their experience has been only of the beast in the countries where the white man is lord. The Somali in free Abyssinia is a gratuitous affront to all men, whether white or black. Never have I wanted more to shoot three men in the stomach all at once.

Deliverance came in the form of a hand-car. A heaven-sent Abyssinian inspector of the railway telephone line with two assistants, all armed with rifles and draped with bandoliers. They were immediately all solicitous over my predicament. They had a key to the station fortress and they helped me to get my gear in and invited me to sleep there with them. Upon my weak suggestion that I might just as well set up my tent, they were shocked and told me with horrified gusto that these were very bad people around here; and over the after-dinner smoke they told me what *they* thought about Somalis; and then I knew that I had misjudged the race. My opinion had been a pallid thing of weak sentiment in comparison to the truth.

The next day my deliverers piled obligation upon me by devoting the whole of the day to helping me find

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transport for my gear out to the pioneer's farm; and that, although they ought to have gone on down the line, and would have to render explanations to authority later on. Some more hungry Somalis lounged near and suggested offhandedly that they thought they could find a camel or two if I would pay six dollars a day for each. But the Amhara telephone men urged strongly against having anything to do with them.

Around noon an aged Galla came to fetch a pot of water from the station tank; heaven knows how many miles, for Galla villages are sparse along that border territory. Gallas I knew to be good people, with whom I could deal. I knew that relief had come. The old man said that he would be able to bring some donkeys, but he would have to go far and he would not be able to get back before evening. I quickly gave him money in advance to bind him, and I blessed him and told him to hurry.

A long afternoon was to be spent. I suggested to my Amhara friends that we might take a stroll out and see if we could perhaps get a gazelle for supper. But they were shocked again.

Those distant huts were the outposts of a small local tribe known as Karaiyus, and these people's delight was to stalk the stranger within their gates and to drive a spear through him. But they were not treacherous, added my benefactors; not like Somalis.

I was getting into cheerful country.

My good Galla came; though not till morning; and he brought five donkeys and two sturdy looking women, the only beasts of burden he had been able to

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get. He knew how to load and drive them too. It was a very efficient little caravan. Women don't carry quite so heavy a load as donkeys, and they make more noise than camels on the trail; but they cover more ground because they don't stop to eat cactuses.

CHAPTER XIX

A PIONEER FARM

THE pioneer's farm was on the other side of the railroad from that outpost Karaiyu village. Barren, sparse bush country, dotted with Somali huts like round mouse-traps, and scorchingly hot. My Foolish Faithful moaned horribly all the way about how sick he was; but he never lagged an inch.

The farm itself was "on a river." On a river, in the lower levels of Abyssinia, means near but sufficiently far away from the mosquito grounds, usually a mile. This river had a belt of heavy jungle along its banks, at least a mile wide. Since moist jungle also harbors mosquitos, the farm *boma*, the thorn fence inclosing the buildings, was another half mile from the jungle in a treeless furnace of empty plain. Which meant that drinking-water had to be hauled a mile and a half from the river. The system is an obsession with planters in Abyssinia. And the farm compound always hums with mosquitos anyway.

The pioneer's wife had just died of black water fever. He himself was down with fever when I arrived. At the edge of the property I was met by a white man, a relative of the pioneer. He was armed with rifle and

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revolver. I told him who I was and what I wanted to do. He grinned and said:

"Herr Gott! You come here to make a tour. Come along and see how we live and then decide how far you think you can go ahead."

In the farm *boma* sat another young man, checking off laborers' tools for the lunch hour. He too sat with a rifle over his knees and an automatic pistol at his belt, though the laborers were Gouragis and Shankallas imported from outside.

I was taken in to pay my respects to the old man in his fever bed; and a rifle leaned up against the bedpost.

That was how they lived on that farm.

The reason was the old, old trouble of all pioneers. The man had taken up his land with all the due formalities of the law; and the first thing that he was up against was the ancient question of grazing trouble.

The Somalis and Karaiyus had let their camels and their cattle roam unrestricted over the whole of that country-side; and now suddenly here came an outsider who said they must keep their animals off because they ate some foolish thing that the stranger wanted to plant.

Neither Somalis nor Karaiyus were people to recognize what was meant by a piece of paper that had been given by the far-away Government to the stranger. It was only in the vaguest way that they recognized the Government itself. And both Somalis and Karaiyus were aggressive enough to drive their animals many miles to graze on that very ground just to annoy the stranger.

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To a German East Africander trained to Teutonic respect for government, and to Teuton-trained natives, this was more than merely defiance; it was sacrilege. Appeal to the far-away Government brought only more papers of confirmation. So the outraged pioneer constituted himself the enforcer of the law.

It is testimony to his indomitable perseverance that he drove the local herdsmen out of his grant and kept them out. Not without a certain amount of fighting and gun display. But he cleared his land and held it—with as much comfort, doubtless, as our own pioneers used to hold frontier posts. Living on that farm under those hair-trigger conditions brought home to me with unpleasant vividness what a frightful life our pioneers must have lived under similar conditions with our Indians.

It meant living under arms all the time; never turning one's back upon a stranger; peering through a loophole before opening a door; going out to hunt meat with the permanent fear of being hunted one's self. And all for what? It meant that his relations' children—he had none of his own—might perhaps some day, if he worked like a dog and if luck never failed, be rich planters in the growing country of Abyssinia.

But that is the history of all pioneers. They are the strong souls who give their everything to the future and find themselves repaid by the sheer hardship which is meat and drink to them. Let their posterity set up idols to them and slay goats over their graves.

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Small chance was there of this man who lived in an armed camp himself being able to supply me with outfit and men to go traipsing off on a several days' trip into an unpleasant interior.

So that I have to report yet another failure. My war correspondent trip fizzled. I never got into that part of the Ogaden where the wreck of the wealthy expedition took place. But I did get to make long rides in among the Ogaden Somalis and to learn the local native gossip; and the story, since much ink has flowed in the European press about the incident, is well worth the reporting.

It is a naïve and truly African tale, in that it develops into three complete and utterly conflicting stories—the official British, the official Abyssinian, and the unofficial local talk. All three are interesting as being indicative of different psychologies and policies, and showing how little scraps of history may come to differ so radically in different seemingly truthful records.

The official British version, as accepted and printed by a host of British newspapers, is that the titled organizer of the hunting party obtained various letters and passports at the capital, and obtained, at the same time, assurance that letters and telephone messages would be sent to chiefs and local governors all along the route to make smooth his way before him—even as when princes of the land journey abroad into their far-flung domains.

All precise and proper and authentic, as things should be when wealthy expeditions fare forth into the

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treacherous wastes. As I, too, would have loved to fare forth.

But from there on authenticity wavers. The rest of the report of slaughter seems to come from British Somali "refugees." Their story is that the great camel caravan that was coming in from British Somaliland to take over the extravagant hunting expedition, relying upon the letters that were to have been sent to all local Abyssinian governors, marched innocently across the border and made camp in carefree security. That suddenly they were wantonly attacked; fired upon with rifles by Abyssinian soldiery in the night. That many of them were killed. That the survivors fled in confusion; and that the camp was looted.

A serious charge, if true in its entirety. The horrible atrocity rests on the say-so of a gang of Somalis; but this version was pretty generally accepted by the British press, and more than one newspaper indignantly commented upon the incident as but one more example of the inefficiency of the Ethiopian Government which either was not able or did not care to guarantee security to British subjects.

Many indignant gentlemen in England, who knew nothing about the country and nothing at all about the conditions, read their breakfast newspapers and dutifully wrote letters to the "Times" about it, demanding, according to immemorial national custom, that something be done to protect these poor people who relied for protection upon the British flag. Wuff-wuff and so forth.

Thus does the Lion growl. Thus does the sentiment

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of the Lion's cubs make itself manifest. Doubtless with perfect justification from their own point of view. Which, of course, is not always the same as that existing in other parts of Europe.

As an example, a French writer's point of view on this case is summed up in the typically Gallic phrase, "false Anglo-Saxon humanitarianism which camouflages, in effect, quite a policy of imperialism." I quote it, not as being any more true than any other point of view, but to show that other views do exist.

The Abyssinian official version, as printed in the semi-official organ of Ethiopian news, while it admits the fighting, differs considerably as to detail and motive. Letters were despatched, it is claimed, to all local chiefs and governors, as had been promised. It was infinitely to be regretted that some accident incidental to the distance and the dangerous roads involved prevented delivery of the letter for the governor of that far district bordering on British Somaliland. It was an extraordinary coincidence that this governor happened right at that time to be pursuing a large gang of British Somali raiders who had broken across the border on a cattle-rustling expedition into the preserves of their neighbors—also Somalis, though in Abyssinian territory. It was sheer evil fate, then, that these raiders, falling in with their compatriots of the camel caravan, had hobnobbed with them and had made camp together.

How was the governor to know anything about that? Making a forced march with his soldiers, he

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came up with the raiders' camp by night, and, of course, immediately opened fire. The innocent—if any Somalis could be innocent—keeping company with malefactors, suffered together with the guilty. And in the resultant confusion the alert raiders found opportunity to get away with quite a lot of wealthy expedition equipment.

It must be admitted that this version reads a little too perfectly angelic in its innocence.

The unofficial local talk differs quite a lot from either official version. Being the straight, uncooked yarn as it passed from mouth to mouth among native people of that district—the news of the day—it is worthy of consideration.

The British Somalis, so runs the tale, came with their camels across the border. A caravan such as was suitable to the wealth and dignity of the mighty hunters; a hundred and twenty camels and something over a hundred men. They camped in Abyssinian territory to wait for the great expedition. To them came the governor of the district and demanded what the heck they meant by invading his territory in that manner. They told him who they were and why; and he said, all right, let them show their passports.

The Somalis said they had no passports and that they didn't need any passports. That their passports were in the pocket of the very great Englishman whose servants they were; so the governor had better be good.

The Abyssinian governor replied that that might be so; but that he knew nothing about it. And in the

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meanwhile, since it was Abyssinian law just as much as it was British law, that foreigners must not enter the country without passports—particularly an armed company—would they kindly hurry up and get to hell out of there and wait on their own side of the border till their passports came?

The invaders replied—and having dealt with Somalis, I can well believe it—that they were British subjects and that they had been hired by British officials in their own country to go and wait for this very important British chief, and that they would be hanged if they would get up and move camp for any paltry little local governor.

After an hour or so of this sort of acrid repartee the scrap started. Somalis claim pridefully that their confrères killed a hundred Abyssinians. Abyssinians claim that the local governor with but a handful of police cleaned out the army of the invaders.

The traveler may well read this story as well for its entertainment as for its lesson. An event transpires in Africa. Within a week three widely conflicting stories are current about it, all "on the best authority." Let the traveler so regard *all* stories out of Africa.

This one was of sufficient importance—since angry members of Parliament in London had risen up to demand what the Lion was going to do about the wilful slaughter of his subjects—to call for official inquiry and restitution.

A non-partizan commission chosen from among the other legations sat upon the case, and, after much sift-

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ing of plausible prevarications, accepted a composite story which bore out, in effect, the Abyssinian official explanation that the local governor had not wilfully murdered the subjects of the Lion; but that he had really thought them to be robbers; that only six British subjects had been killed anyhow; and that the affair had been a "regrettable accident." The commission found, however, that the Abyssinian Government had not exercised sufficient care to *insure* the receipt of orders by the local governor; and so it imposed a cash indemnity of some thousands of pounds or so.

The sum is not important. I have forgotten it. My impression remains that it rated dead Somalis at very much more than they were worth.

Important, however, is the astounding interpretation placed upon the affair by those suave gentlemen who talk so intimately of world politics in so many languages.

"Bah, propaganda stuff!" they declaim with intense scorn at the transparency of the thing. These linguistic gentlemen are the first to claim that those people who don't exist are real and active entities. And they produce, as always, their convincingly plausible arguments.

"Look you," they say. "How many men had this caravan? A hundred or so, no? They knew that the Government of Abyssinia was favorable to them. They had the royal passports in their pockets—mark you, my friend, in *their* pockets, not in the pockets of the relay caravan from Somaliland. Was there, then, no time to mail them to Berbera before the caravan started? One is not so foolish, is one? Good. The relay arrives

without passports. It is attacked. The Englishman hears of it and with his whole company flies for the safety of the railroad. He is a person of importance. There is a great pothor in all the British newspapers. The people are very angry.

"Ha, ha! it is clever, no? For, let us admit it, the English are by no means cowards. They do not take to flight so easily. It is their habit to go through *à la* bulldog. Does it not then occur to a man of discernment that there is a reason for this so unusual panic?

"You ask why? My friend, you are not so foolish yourself. But I will tell you—" And here the grimy finger of conviction presses the point. "The affair constitutes but one more instance of the horrible savagery of Abyssinia to be laid before the League of Nations!

"You laugh. But let me ask you. Why so much fuss about this nondescript Englishman who lived in a mud hut among the Gallas with whom he quarreled and the Gallas burned his hut? I tell you—another instance. Why so much print about this raid into Uganda where some fellow caught a couple of slaves?—yet one more instance. Evidence, all of it, carefully piled up to show that Abyssinia ought to be administered by one of the great powers of Europe.

"Ha, we are not so blind, some of us, that we cannot see the machinery how it works. We have watched it work through all the pages of imperial history."

One listens amazed, as always, to the bizarre disclosures of these clever gentlemen. They are so confoundedly plausible that they arrest one's thought. Their interpretations are possibly unjust, their allega-

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tions probably base calumnies. But the seeds that they sow cannot be blown away by the mere breath of superior affected derision. And these gentlemen bring this kind of charge not only against England but against France and Italy and even Germany. Their tremendous importance lies, not in the fact that they will retail their scandals to any foreigner who will listen, but that they whisper them into the ears of every Abyssinian who has the interests of his country at heart. Given a sufficient quantity of seed, a certain amount of fruit must develop. It is such fruit that accounts for so much of the suspicion with which every move of European diplomacy is regarded in Abyssinia.

It is the great good fortune of America that no imperialistic ambitions can be attributed to her. And that is the one great outstanding reason why Abyssinia is anxious to welcome American enterprises in the country.

And who shall say that Abyssinia is not justified?

The foregoing scandalous interlude explains my failure to get into that hunting paradise of the Ogaden where the great caravan was put to flight. But there were compensations at that outlying stead that hoped some day to be a prosperous plantation. That belt of heavy jungle alongside of the river was full of things that made mysterious noises at night. The pioneers had been too busy to investigate and the laborers were too close to the dull oxen to explain.

By daylight—that is to say, by early morning and late afternoon light—it was full of the usual African

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bok with the funny names, notably a bush bok as red as a red deer. I much wanted to bring home a specimen for the museum which might have turned out to be a new species and might thus have added scientific dignity to my wanderings. But museum collecting requires a most elaborate care.

The four enormous hounds that the pioneer kept as watch dogs—and kept good and hungry too—tore a hole in the mud wall of the cook-house and ate up my specimen.

It occurs to me that I have said very little about shooting the usual bok and things. There has been reason. Thousands of people have written about trekking in Africa and acres of print have been expended upon the slaying of beeste and bok.

Now I contend that modern civilized man is not interested in the killing of inoffensive and non-dangerous beasts. My own attitude is that of thousands of others who travel. I would rather shoot with a camera than with a gun. I prefer to watch beasts alive through a field-glass than to see them dead at my feet. I am no sentimentalist about the thing; but, on the other hand, I am not out to set up a record of slaughter.

Therefore, while I make exceptions for special trophies, I shoot otherwise strictly for the pot. I am totally devoid of the murderous excuse known as "sporting instinct." I get as close as I can, rest my rifle as steady as I can, and endeavor to kill my beast as swiftly and as painlessly as I can.

It seems to me, then, that unless some unusual inci-

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dent be connected with the case, there is as little thrill in reading about as in shooting deer meat.

There is thrill enough about other things. There was, for instance, thrill in going out alone into that jungle belt with my ears full of warnings that Karaiyus and Somalis burned with hate against the farm, and that anywhere beyond the actual limits of the property I might chance upon—or worse, be chanced upon by—a party of them.

Yet, go alone I had to. The white men were too desperately busy trying to get ground cleared and planted before the rains should come to think of roaming the bush with me; and my crafty boy, who was a town product and no jungle man, lay and groaned with his multitudinous pains.

Most of us have played at *Chingachgook* and *Leather Stocking* with the stealthy hostile redskins crawling around in the woods. It used to be quite my most fascinating and exciting game. The same game played in close jungle, with the possibility of hostile spearmen crawling around, is as much more exciting as it is less fascinating.

Every rustle in the leaves—caused most likely by a bird; every twig that cracked—stepped upon by a fleeing rabbit, brought my heart up to where I could taste it and tightened my grip on my rifle. It *might* have been a prowling Somali, to whom I could be, of course, no more than but another white man come to the farm to harass them.

It made me feel that I was being constantly followed and watched. Not once but a dozen times stealthy

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sounds in the bush that I had just left caused me to whirl round with ready gun. And when I set my teeth and forced myself to walk back, of course there was nothing. Only the drip of moisture from moss and the gloomy green shadows that made one feel creepily alone with the jungle spooks. Then the stealthy sound would be repeated somewhere else. That game was very much not my favorite one.

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It is a fool thing to go alone into the jungle at any time. Not that a boy or gun-bearer would be much protection; but as a matter of help in case of accident. A hundred things may happen to incapacitate one in the jungle—a fall, an attack by a wounded animal, a snake bite. A native boy, though he might run around bleating in a panic, can at least be cursed into going to fetch help.

This is another rule that the traveler in the far places should note in his red-tagged book.

Any kind of boy will do; even a bovine laborer from a pioneer farm. But in this case of my pioneer farm, hoed ground and seed were more vitally important than the importunities of a stranger who wanted to prowl the jungle when he didn't have to. Besides, those were farm laborers by many generations of heredity, not hunters. They wouldn't enter that dim-lit tree belt. Devils, they said, lurked in the dark jungle, spooks that took the form of leopards and jumped upon people's backs.

A faint trace here, I am sure, of the leopard cult of the Congo side. But I could never follow it up.

One day I found a footprint. I was following a faint

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spoor that looked like leopard, or maybe unusually large hyena—let some mighty hunter tell the difference in leaf mold. When, there it was, deep in a patch of moist soil, with the mark of a ring on the second toe. A Karaiyu foot. Clear it stood, and alone. Not a companion print for yards round; not in all the woods.

I felt all the sensations of *Robinson Crusoe*, and I moved as fast as a lizard for shelter when a hawk's shadow floats over the grass. I shrank under a sloping tree trunk and inched an eye out to peer for a gorilloid figure on a low branch with weighted spear poised, the way they hunt for buffalo and rhino.

Nothing. Not a branch big enough to bear anything. Not even a tree which a man might have jumped into and have climbed. That footprint remained a mystery.

Another day I did one of those stupid things that fatheads do when they have absorbed enough of the hotel veranda stories about the ways of beasts.

In a quiet pool of the river I saw some baby crocodiles busy with the affairs of their lives in the shallows. Little two-footers. Well, it is hotel veranda natural history that where the little fellows are there are no big ones. Or rather, to put it more accurately, where the big fellows are, the little ones keep away; for big crocs gobble up little crocs just as readily as they gobble little nigger boys.

I wanted to observe the doings of little crocs at close hand. So I crept cautiously down to the water's edge. A stiff branch like a horizontal bar above my head offered me an excellent hold to lean over and study the cute little things.

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Intuition—or maybe the acute tension of lone jungle prowling—warned me. Perhaps I heard a ripple that didn't belong in that still pool. Anyway, my hair rose and I jumped. I swung my feet clear and jerked astride of my horizontal bar with the agility of the ancient gymnastic days.

And, *whoosh!* A great tail—forty feet long and as thick as a tree, it looked—lashed across my oozy boot-prints and whipped back again. It soused me with spray and abolished the baby swimming pool and was gone. The pool stilled again. Not a ripple broke the surface anywhere. Calm and peaceful, it reflected only my God-given tree.

I got back to good dry land from my perch like a monkey by the arboreal route. The natural history that I learned out of that experience was that a crocodile strikes twice. I had always imagined that a single sweep of the great tail was the rule.

Yes, thrills are by all means to be had roaming the trackless wastes, without shooting deer meat. Incidentally, I wonder whether any of those people who have written their reams and have coined the term "trackless wastes" ever saw one. My own observation is that there is no such thing as a "trackless" waste. Every half-acre of plain and every yard of jungle has its tracks, from the smooth six-inch swaths of the driver ants that eat everything as they pass, down to the fine needle-pricks of the scarab beetles, and all the way up again to the wandering, well-trodden paths of the larger ungulates. Paths that a man, stooping low, may follow for miles without ever once using machete

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or belt-ax to clear his way. It is unfortunate only that the paths never go where a man wants to go.

But it is jungle alone at night that sets the short hair creeping all up and down the spine. Ever since my earliest reading I have admired the fortitude of mighty hunters who have stalked through the midnight jungles without a tremor. I wonder how many of them have not kept looking back with the certitude that something was going to jump out on them. There's where the gun-bearer who walks behind is such a comfort on occasions like this. The things can jump out on him.

There was a moon these nights. With the last quarter of the moon the rain would come, they told me; so I made the most of it. I went to sit out over a pool. This time for meat. The farm was down to the disgrace of eating guinea-fowl; and this was a likely place for a drinking-hole, where the bank sloped gently to a hard pebbly shore and a sand-bank slanted down the other side of the river.

And all the way out the jungle spooks followed me. I could hear them padding softly behind and stepping on dead sticks in their anxiety to keep up with me—I'm sure I am not the first person who has almost run in the woods at night. I could have sworn I heard them breathing.

They *must* have been jungle spooks; because whenever I turned, there was nothing there; only white arc light and pools of black shadow. And besides, natives, I knew, would not be trailing me at night. They were

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more afraid of the spooks than I was. Surely they were spooks.

At my drinking-hole I was more comfortable. I got my back against a wide, comforting tree trunk—a tall dead tree that threw no foliage shadow and was surrounded by nice noisy dead leaves for many yards round. And there I sat down to wait for whatever might come and to wish that I might light a pipe.

And waited and waited, listening for noises. The only noises were more insects than entomology knows anything about. They trilled and they cricked and they hummed and they scuffled. What an appalling noise an ordinary beetle can make among dry leaves at night! Till I cursed them for drowning out the footfalls of beasts that I wanted to hear.

And then suddenly the spooks were there again. In a patch of bush not thirty yards away. They stepped on things and snuffled through their noses and whispered to one another. I knew that they were watching me.

The bush patch was in white flood light; but within was black shadow, and there, I knew, they stood and whisked their tails softly in the grass.

With a stout tree behind me I was not afraid of spooks. I sat without moving and waited for something eatable to come down to drink. But nothing came. They must have winded the spooks. And the spooks sat and watched me out of the dark. I knew they were there because occasionally they moved.

And then, suddenly again, I began to know that they weren't spooks. Spooks couldn't tread that heavily on a stick. My skin crawled all over me, loose and

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prickly. What a fool I had been to swallow that yarn about natives not venturing into the jungle at night! I might have known that it was but another of those pieces of hotel veranda misinformation. I had had no experience of Karaiyus; but I knew well enough that the only good point that Somalis possessed was their courage.

How many? I wondered desperately. And what should be my next move? Plans raced through my brain. Should I yawn and pretend to be stiff and get up and edge round my tree? Or might my action arouse suspicion and bring half a dozen spears out of the bush before I could take cover? Or should I begin shooting wild?

So I did nothing. I just sat tense and took long breaths, so that my shooting would be steady when I had to.

The next move was from them. The faintest possible shuffling. My overstrung sense began to assure me that things were not so bad as my first shock of discovery had imagined. I was persuaded that there was only one. I began to reason more clearly. That was thick bush. A man lying there could not throw a spear effectively. He would have to come out into the open, or at least make considerable noise of preparation. I would have time enough to take cover if I once got to my feet.

I yawned elaborately, therefore, and got up and stretched so that my rifle butt was ready to drop to shoulder. The man moved again. I dropped my butt to my shoulder and felt that I could afford to give him one chance.

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"*Minde-nou ante? Minde fallegal?*" I called. It was Amharic, but he would know well enough that it meant, "Who's there and what do you want?"

The answer was another quick shuffle. I had visions of him already standing with arm flung back for a throw. I could never get behind my tree now, and in moonlight one can't well dodge spears. My nerve gave out. I fired blind into the shadow, slammed the bolt out and in with a vague thought of firing as long as the magazine held out, and, instead of darting behind it, I stood still like a fool in front of my tree.

Crash! in the bush patch. Smash, *whroosh!* at the outer edge. I caught a glimpse of a long spotted form clear fifty feet of white moonlight in two splendid great bounds and disappear again into black shadow.

And I stood still like a fool in front of my tree.

Crash! again. On the other side of the river. My rifle still at my shoulder, I jerked round toward it. On the edge of the sand-spit, just outside of the bush shadow in clear moonlight, stood a water buck, head high, ears wide out in alarm, listening for which way to run.

My nerve was gone entirely. I didn't think. I caught the moonlight on the front sight and fired. It must have been a high head shot; for the beast dropped flat without a kick.

And then my wits began to come back to me and I remembered the fast flowing water between us.

A man always pays for losing tight hold on his nerve.

There was no use waiting in that place any longer.

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So I went home. And all through the jungle I never gave a thought to spooks. I was too busy regretting that buck I had shot across the water, and too bitterly busy regretting that leopard I had not shot.

It was later reflection that found time to speculate. Had the leopard trailed me all the way out while I thought about jungle spooks? Or had it come into that bush patch from another direction when I first heard it? Was it watching me? Or was it, like myself, watching the water-hole? It was clear, of course, why other beasts had not come to drink. But that water buck—had it, too, winded the enemy from all the way across the river, and was it also playing the waiting game, lying in the shadow, till my shot startled it into betraying itself? These are natural history questions that they don't answer in the hotel verandas of Addis Abeba.

Cold roast guinea-fowl for late supper before turning into my cot forced me to decide upon strenuous measures. In America I have never felt that I could afford the luxury of guinea-fowl. Having eaten it in Africa till the feathers began to sprout down my back, I feel that I have missed nothing. It must be that the extra three dollars on the menu in our home hotels goes to compensate the chef for his art that makes the thing palatable. For guinea-fowl gathered off the African plain and put into the camp pot is, without any exception, the toughest meat I know.

It is no sort of light snack on which to go to bed. I dreamt the dream of the loaded feet that ran in

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glue while satanic hordes of spearmen bore down upon me with horrible speed and then changed into leopards and stalked me through black trees that grew as close as a rail fence.

So I determined that in the morning I would make a catamaran raft and go across and fetch that good water buck meat that lay on the sand-bank. Vain thought. The hyenas had been there long before morning, and with the first daylight the vultures had come to see about it. They sat about on the low tree limbs now, too gorged to get out of the slanting sun which was already hot enough to cause them to gasp with open beaks and spread wings.

But I made a catamaran anyhow. They told me at the farm that the other side of the river swarmed with leopards. None of them had ever been there; nor apparently had natives been across. But leopards were there in plenty. There must be, for the very reason that nobody had ever been there to disturb them.

So once again I fell for the local misinformation and built me a boat; for, having let one good fur rug get away under my nose, expediency demanded that I go and retrieve my honor for the sake of my lady's wardrobe. Three six-inch logs with cross-bars lashed fore and aft to prevent rolling over made a perfectly serviceable catamaran that crocodiles couldn't upset. I purchased a goat for thirty-seven cents and crossed the water while there was still daylight enough to pick a good spot on which to lie up.

And, marvel, the misinformation was true. Not a mile from the river I found great padded cat-tracks.

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Huge round pugs, deep embedded, with bluntish claw points faintly marked where the soft clay caused the paws to spread. He must have been an old monster. I prayed only that his fur might not be mangy, as those old fellows' so often are. Within another half-mile I found more tracks, smaller ones, no claws showing even in the moistest places. A young one, this; but big enough for a nice fur. Oh, yes, there were leopards there all right.

The country began to open out a bit. Less heavy jungle and more open bush. I found me a nice place to stake out my goat. No tree shadows and about twenty yards clearance all round. For myself I cut a tunnel in an impermeable thorn bush, wormed into it feet first and lay down on my stomach for my long wait like a hermit crab. That is to say, with rifle thrust out where I could see the sights in the moonlight, yet able to scuttle back into my den should necessity arise. After the first hour spent in picking out protruding thorns, I was comfortable enough to wait in patience for the last rays of daylight and the first of the struggling moon.

How that goat yelled! Not the petting *mm-m-m-m* of the country lane can-eater but the piercing, long-drawn *blaa-a-a-ah* of the Abyssinian billy; and with fog signal regularity and tirelessness. If leopards were anywhere within a mile that night they would surely hear my bait. I prayed, in my certitude, that it might be the big fellow who would hear it first rather than some paltry little six- or seven-foot cat.

And then I heard my leopard.

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*Whrauoo-oo-ough awwoo-ough whaugh hough
hough hugh hugh huh!*

Full-mouthed and clear. But, praised be saints! far away as yet, and, mercy of heaven! on the farther side, not between me and the river.

I had heard that noise in zoos before. I had a horrible picture of a great tawny beast standing with heaving flanks and mane, lowered head, and cupped lips as it roared out its notice to all the lesser beasts that it was abroad, not behind bars. And now I understood those enormous cat-tracks.

One does not lie up alone on the ground for that sort of cat; not even in the thickest thorn bush in all Africa. Particularly not with a thirty-caliber rifle and 180-grain bullet. I had all kinds of confidence in my .30 Savage; but that was no load for one of the big four, and by night.

The rule is, nothing smaller than .405 for lion, buffalo, rhino, and elephant; .457 is better, and .475 better still. Rifles carrying blunt-nosed bullets weighing up to 380 grains and delivering a muzzle energy of close to two tons.

If that is the rule for heavy game, one might well ask why the mighty hunter does not carry such a gun all the time for any kind of game. There are two outstanding reasons. One is trajectory, or that much-argued thing, point-blank range. These heavy bullets, even with the most modern highest velocity loads, have a trajectory as high as fifteen inches or more at two hundred yards. That is to say, if one aims point-blank at a beast two hundred yards away, the bullet

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will fall fifteen inches below the point aimed at. One must therefore guess the distance and run the rear sight up accordingly. Fifteen inches leave plenty of room to miss a buck entirely, and guessing range over a heat-shimmery plain is considerable guessing.

Therefore, for lesser game one uses a smaller caliber bullet with a very high velocity and correspondingly lower trajectory. My Savage .30, for instance, has a trajectory at two hundred yards of less than four inches; so that I can snap up and shoot point-blank at anything within that range without worrying about the sights.

On the other hand, one seldom shoots at heavy game two hundred yards away; and if one does, one has ample time to consider range and sight. Heavy-game shooting is close work, and these beasts require the smashing impact of heavy bullets multiplied by the square of their velocity, or a blow as close to a couple of tons as one can get, in order to stop them and stop them dead.

Another reason is expense. Those heavy-game guns are all European hand built and cost accordingly; and our great manufacturers have seen to it that their tottering industry is well protected by a perfectly wicked customs duty. Which is why the fortunate class of sportsmen all go to England to buy their big-game battery.

If I am not mistaken, the most powerful American made cartridge is the .405 for the 1895 model Winchester repeater. A good load; muzzle energy, a ton and a half. But a leetle bit light, as a man who has

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shot more than a hundred lions told me, to be dead sure of stopping a charge dead.

Lions, as well as heavier game, have been killed with less. But only the mightiest of mighty hunter dares to sit and wait for one of them at night with .30 and 180 grains.

As for me, I crawled swiftly out of my hole and looked for the well-known tree into which lesser hunters climb and spend a safe and comfortable night in a crotch at the base of a limb as wide as an arm-chair.

That tree wasn't growing in my part of Africa. All the trees that might have furnished that sort of crotch didn't commence to have any limbs before sixty feet up in the air. If there was such a tree, I missed it in the dark. I didn't stop to look long enough. I ran from that place, and I am not ashamed. But I did cut loose that goat first.

After that I kept to the plantation side of the river. We postponed for a future date, after the cotton seed should be planted, a daylight expedition with men and dogs to go across river and perhaps find the king, or one of his relatives, sleeping in the shade of a rock where we could all fire at him together and make up in volume what we lacked in weight of bullets. For the present I would still have to roam alone; until the moon changed and the first rain came; and then all hunting and trekking would be done with till next October.

Only a few nights more. And on one of them I saw a devil. It was within half a mile of the plantation

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too, in cleared ground. I was out hoping to get some jackal skins. The silver jackal of the Abyssinian highlands has a rufous fur with a wide silver stripe down the middle of the back; much more beautiful, to my mind, than "Hudson Bay silver fox (dyed rabbit)."

Thinking—as always—of my absent partner in the joys of life, I was braving the terror of the African night and the danger of wild beasts in a devoted attempt to get a neck-piece of these. When the devil came.

From out of the night came a pounding of heavy hoofs. Not the hard sound of horses' or cattle's hoofs, but the duller thudding of broad, heavy feet.

"A hippo galloping like mad," I said to myself. But what would a hippo be doing so far from the water when feed was plentiful right at the river bank?

It was a night of white moonlight and racing clouds. I couldn't see the thing, whatever it was, but I ran in the direction of the sound. It seemed to remain in one place for a while, prancing and stamping, and above the pounding of the hoofs I heard a screaming. The long, high-pitched screaming of a devil in an awful rage.

Then the galloping started again, and in my direction. With all the presence of mind of a fathead I stepped under the shadow of a tree, so that I could see what passed in the moonlight without myself being too clearly seen. And in another minute it was hurtling past, not fifty yards from where I stood.

A vast dark bulk that might have been hippo gone mad. And on its back was the devil. A black, sinewy

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shape that writhed and contorted itself and every now and then screamed a blood-curdling scream.

Not fifty yards away, in bright moonlight. And I, fathead, stood in the black shadow where I couldn't see a rifle sight.

I shouted and ran toward the portent, holding my rifle clumsily to my shoulder, like actors do in the moving pictures of war scenes. The devil heard me and turned his head. Green flash-lights blazed out at me and it screamed snarlingly again. And then it was gone in a patch of shadow and the mad hoofs pounded on.

Long after I had lost my chance to shoot I could hear them careering wildly on, blundering into bushes, and the devilish screaming floated back on the night wind; till both died out in the distance, and I realized that the night was uncannily quiet. Crickets, tree frogs, all insects had been alarmed into stillness by that thundering passage.

Then a night jar grated harshly above me and a hyena laughed, *whroo-eeh-eeh-eeh-eeh*. There would probably be something to eat if it followed. The tree frogs peeped hesitantly to one another; then trilled out in chorus. The night life of Africa was in full swing once more.

What was it? What drama or tragedy of the night had hurtled like a comet into my orbit and out again? Morning showed great four-toed tracks and flecks of blood. That was all. I would have said hippo. But the pioneer insisted on rhino. But, I argued, "what the devil would jump a rhino that way?" And he said, "Only the devil himself."

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So I've seen him. And he is black and has green eyes and a tail and long white teeth. Which is perfectly orthodox.

The only other thing that looks like that and has that kind of a disposition is a black panther.

African nights, when the moon is out and it doesn't rain, are replete with the thrill of unexpected happenings. The seduction of night prowling is full of allure. But there are people who have known Africa all their lives and they say that nothing in Africa can continue pleasant or comfortable for very long. Something must always come along and spoil things.

It came along and spoiled for me those nights of moonlight wandering. I had been becoming scornful about the unwisdom of lone night prowling. Familiarity with the warning brought its inevitable result of carelessness. I began to persuade myself that the old pioneer, having been at actual hostilities with them, was inclined to overstress the axiom that Somalis never forgive.

So, apparently, thought also one of his assistants. He was new on the farm; but he was also an ex-East Africander accustomed to well-tamed natives, and he couldn't believe all the stories of local wildness.

It came Sunday. Farm laborers in Abyssinia, whether they be negroid Shankallas from the west or Arab brown from the north, are all devout Christians on Sunday, who cannot work because they must pray. So there was holiday perforce. Early in the morning

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this assistant man stuck his head into my tent and said he was going for a walk.

"Without a gun?" I asked. "Or I suppose your boy is carrying it."

No, he said, he was going alone; and what was the use of taking a gun? He was just going for a stroll before breakfast.

I was the last man who spoke to him.

Breakfast-time came and nobody worried. Lunch-time came, and we laughed over him for getting lost. But with late afternoon the pioneer began to be nervous. He had known of people getting lost in Africa before. Not even a tenderfoot could get lost in that place, he pointed out; for a conical mountain peak reared itself up in the sky as a sign-post for miles around.

He routed out all the farm help and drove them off in searching parties to shout and fire off guns. With Teutonic thoroughness he parceled out the search fanwise from the *boma* to the river to cover as much as five miles on either side of his property.

With evening the farthest of the search parties began to come back. They had shouted and they had fired off guns and never an answering shout had they heard.

That made things look very serious indeed. We had been hoping that the man might be lying hurt somewhere and unable to walk back. But if he could not even shout to direct searchers to himself. . . .

There remained the dim hope that he might have torn his way with his bare hands through the bush for

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farther than five miles and that he might not get in till some time after dark. So a great bonfire was lit to guide him. But it was more a gesture than a real hope.

He remains one of the mysteries of the bush. Was it a fall? Or hostile spear? Or snake bite? Possibly time and chance may tell. More probably nobody will ever know. One cannot search every inch of a jungle, even for five miles. A body may lie a few feet away from a searcher and, unless stumbled upon, never be seen. And within two days not even bones are left; for it is only the heaviest bones of the largest beasts that the powerful jaws of hyenas cannot crunch.

There is a worse thought. A sick man, unable to groan very loud, may lie in a jungle tangle only a few feet away from a searcher and, unless stumbled upon, be *left lying*.

I repeat. It is a fool thing to go into the jungle alone.

And then the rain reached even that low-lying district and put an end to all jungle-running. I was not altogether sorry. I had dodged a good two months of the wet by keeping moving ahead of it. I had, while I have not recounted the gruesome details of slaughter, obtained, it is true, no specimens for science; but I had slain—what was much more important for my future peace and happiness—enough material for a neck-piece, and maybe for a spotted cloak too.

Two months of city imprisonment could be borne. Camp gear needed overhauling; saddles needed patching. A rest would not be amiss. There was that vague ache in the bones that denoted fever on its way—which

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I would kill with "Plasmochin" when it came. And I needed a bath.

Perhaps it is a good hot bath in a tub with plenty of hot water that one misses most in the jungle. Hurried dips in pools where crocodiles may lurk are too uncomfortable a scramble. Hot water poured over one by a camp boy out of a kerosene can is never very satisfactory. I itched from the bites of sand fleas and flies and all the hundred other insects that Nature put into the jungles for the purpose of discouraging tourists from disturbing her primeval peace.

The city, then, would not be without its compensations for a while.

So thought, also, my lady, whom I had left at the farm by the railroad. Now while a lady should never do such a thing, in Africa it is perhaps almost excusable. She, too, itched from the multitudinous pests of the bush.

Rain was descending in steady streams from leaden skies. Blankets were stickily moist and would not dry. Shoes needed repair. Tents were soggy abodes trampled up with mud.

So that the next biweekly train looked very good indeed. We boarded it with thankfulness and came into the city; and the first thing we did at our hotel home was to order baths. One has to order baths in the sanitary hotel a day in advance. It is a French hotel.

"I took my bath an' I wallered, for, Gawd, I needed it so." And so did my lady. And we both still itched. So we went and asked a doctor about it. He took one look, and then we knew the truth.

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We both had the *yikuck*!

The microscopic bug that makes rabbit warrens in the skin and lives there till one is mistaken for a leper and fingers and toes drop off.

Just where we had picked it up we could not guess. Maybe from our faithful mission boy, who scratched himself all the time. Maybe from sleeping in a Galla hut. Maybe from just taking hold of a blanket or a saddle or anything that a *yikuck* carrier had touched. Goodness knows, we had taken enough chances of infection.

But what matter where. We had it, and it was well established. Not only on the hands and arms, where one who knows about it may check it quickly. We had given it plenty of time to spread, and it had lost no time in spreading.

The remedy for *yikuck* is to smear one's self with an excoriating ointment for five days without bathing—well, we were used to that—and then to boil all one's clothing and to throw away that which can't be boiled. Then to take a cautious tentative bath.

If the doctor with a strong glass then pronounces the fatal word *yikuck*, one smears for five more days and throws away another set of clothing; for the cunning little things come out of their burrows and hide in the clothing till the skin is safe to reënter.

And so on for periods of five days. Or until the excoriating ointment becomes worse than the bug.


Yikuck is distinctly a pest invented by a merciful nature for a people who wear light cotton clothes and can boil each set as they take it off—and for ladies who are

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thankful for any excuses to throw away clothing that has already been worn once.

As for me, I had but one set of clothes. City clothes, that is to say.

But I had two months of leisure ahead of me while it rained to spend in serious quarrel with the things.



CHAPTER XXI

CHRISTIAN ABYSSINIA

WHEN it rains too much for even the hardest of explorers to surround himself with mules and boys and go snooping into the interior, one must needs pry into the affairs of people in the city. Shameless prying bares to the light many things about the habits and manners and customs of any people; some pleasant, some unpleasant. The recording of such information lies within the realm of sordid writer persons. Many such have written books all about Abyssinia. They are full of useful omniscience.

It seems, however, that when the hardest bitten of explorer persons condescends to the pen he cannot attempt to produce a book about all of any country. He hasn't lived there long enough to know all about it. The best he can do is to record personal experiences and such highlights as have particularly interested him, in the hope that they might, at least, not bore other people who read of them.

Such a high-light seems to be this "island of Christianity in a sea of blackest paganism." Christian since a time when most of Europe still dressed in skins. Going, for a moment, even farther back than that far-

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away time, it fills one with astonishment to note that Abyssinia, this isolated corner of "blackest Africa," sent an embassy to Tut-ankh Amen bringing gifts of gold and—think of it!—ships; and that it conducted a flourishing trade with the Hebrews in Solomon's time.

Since those days Abyssinia has held herself aloof, isolated, a veritable outpost of Christianity against the savage paganism of Africa and against the infinitely more formidable assaults of Islam. And, holding thus aloof, has maintained a ritual and a dogma that is a fascinating insight into what the early Christian church must have been.

In order to give an intelligible account of this ancient form of faith it is necessary, as well as interesting, to antedate a little and to commence, let us say, with Queen Balkis, or Makeda of Sheba.

Some historians have claimed that the biblical Sheba was the Saba of ancient Arabia, basing their claim more upon the similarity of name than upon authentic data. Others, possibly better informed, have accepted the Abyssinian version as recounted in their sacred manuscripts—which, incidentally, are quite as ancient and as authentic as any of those upon which our own Old Testament is based.

These manuscripts claim that Sheba was the Soba or the Shoa of Abyssinia, and that the beautiful queen was their own ruler who held court at their sacred city of Axum. Skeptics have been inclined to cast doubt on this probability, on the ground that an African woman could hardly have been so beautiful as to arouse the passions of that connoisseur of women, King Solo-

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mon. Against which aspersion it need only be remarked that this queen came of the same Hamite-Semitic race as did Cleopatra.

It is, at all events, established that the queen did pay a visit to King Solomon; and the Abyssinian sacred records claim, further, that the important result of this visit was a son who grew up to be Menelek I, from whom the present ruler of Abyssinia, H.I.H. Tafari Makonnen, can show his direct descent.

A legend that attaches to this history is that Menelek, upon coming of age, paid a visit to Solomon's court, and that the great king was so favorably impressed with his offspring that he presented him with a replica of the ark of the covenant. The story goes on to say that the son, no whit less wise than his father, thought that a mere replica would be a poor thing to bring back to his country, and that he therefore contrived to effect a substitution in the temple and to come away with the real ark, which rests to-day in a secret underground chamber of an ancient temple at Axum.

And who shall say that the story is not at least as plausible as that which is accepted by millions of Christians over all the rest of the world: to wit, that upon the burning of the temple of Jerusalem the priests smuggled the sacred ark out, and that a hole opened miraculously in the side of Mount Nebo to receive it and then closed, as miraculously, forever?

However, legend or near-fact, it is indubitable that Jewish influence and Jewish religion were strong in Abyssinia from at least that time up to the early years of the Christian era.

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An astounding fact which should be of absorbing interest to Jews the world over is that there exists to-day in Abyssinia a lost tribe of Jews known as the Falasha, who have been isolated for so many centuries that, while retaining the Jewish faith in practically all its ancient purity, they had actually no knowledge that any other Jews existed.

It was not until almost yesterday, 1906 in fact, that definite knowledge of brothers in the faith came to these Falasha through a letter written by a congregation of European rabbis. In reply to which they wrote:

" . . . News of your existence was to us hitherto only fable. Now have we (through your letter) received knowledge and certainty. Therefore, do we rejoice. . . ."

The motto of the ruling house of Abyssinia, the descendants of that first Menelek, to this day is: "The Lion of Judah hath conquered."

It was upon this firm ground of Judaism that Christianity took root, and they are relics of Judaism that explain much of the Abyssinian Christian ritual of to-day.

Legend, which must frankly be so regarded, says that all the kingdom of Ethiopia—with the exception of these stanch Falasha—was converted to Christianity by miraculous intervention at the time of Christ's baptism. Tradition, with nothing to further its claim beyond mere legend, says that St. Matthew visited the country and preached the gospel in what would have been about the year A.D. 30

Only slightly more authentic is a report written by

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Father Francisco Alvarez in the sixteenth century—the first book all about Abyssinia—in which he maintains to have discovered proof that a eunuch from Axum was baptized by St. Philip in Jerusalem in about A.D. 35, and that he returned and converted his people. But since the good father, with the traveler's license of his day, writes also about having delivered a written bull of excommunication to a plague of locusts, which immediately took wing and perished in the sea, his claim of discovered proof must needs be backed by some more evidence before it can be accepted.

Authentic seems to be the fact that a young Phoenician evangelist named Frumentius from the church of Alexandria made his way to Abyssinia in the early part of the A.D. 300s and found a ready soil for his monophysite faith. It is, at all events, record that he returned to Alexandria and was consecrated by the patriarch as the first bishop of Abyssinia. And it is fact that the *abuna*, the archbishop of Abyssinia, is by ancient and irrevocable law always chosen from the Alexandrine church, and that the faith to this day remains monophysite.

Which terminology probably requires a little explanation to the great mass of good Christians who know no more than I did before I read much tangled literature about the history of the Christian church.

In those early times, distraught with many forms of militant paganism and persecution, when people had to think very seriously indeed to be Christians at all, they took their beliefs so seriously that they persecuted each other with savage ferocity over minor points of differ-

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ence which, in these days of tolerance, seem to us not to matter so very much.

It was a lamentable condition of mind, apparently inseparable from strong religious feeling, which has persisted through the centuries. Witch-burnings and Ku-Klux Klannery are but slightly less violent manifestations of the same spirit that tortured heretics and slaughtered Huguenots.

The conflict that raged between the two main parties at the time of Abyssinia's conversion was over the rather confusing matter of the single or the dual nature of the Saviour who died for all of them. It is difficult to follow the exact shades of the difference. But it seems that one party maintained that the nature of Christ was single; that is, God with but the temporary attribute of man. While the other party contended that His nature was dual, God and man combined; which is what most of us—without thinking very much about it—have been taught to believe to-day.

The former party were called Monophysites, or Monothelites or Jacobites or Eutycheans. The latter were called Nestorians or Melchites or Royalists. All after the names of the foremost exponents of their creeds.

One of the most important religious events of the epoch, the Council of Chalcedon, supported by the Byzantine emperor Marcion, after months of stormy session in which murders and kidnappings took no small part, rejected the monophysite doctrine as heretic and damned; and the pious emperor accordingly in-

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augurated some of the drastic measures popular in his time.

It all seems very futile and wrong to us to-day. But in those fervid times people who did not think alike could not live in amity together. And so the Nestorians, being the stronger, stayed in Byzantium and the Monophysites gradually withdrew to Alexandria and organized their creed to suit themselves under a "patriarch." And from them descends the Coptic church of Egypt to-day and the church of Abyssinia.

If firmness of faith is evidence of solidarity, then the church of Abyssinia is in no danger of disintegration. For it has withstood many vicissitudes.

In about the year A.D. 1000 the Falasha Jews uprose in a revolt so successful that they actually captured and held the throne of Abyssinia for a reign of religious terror lasting some forty years.

Scarcely had they been turned out when the great wave of Mohammedan expansion which engulfed all the rest of Africa broke against the hated Christian state that stood as an isolated rock in their midst. Turkey was rising to the height of her power, and her great general Mahmoud Grain overran at least half the country with fire and sword.

Scarcely again had the Turks been expelled in the early part of the sixteenth century, than another assault came from the pagan hordes of the great Galla race from the south. Such headway did these ferocious warriors make that they still constitute quite half the population of Abyssinia; though now subdued—or, let us say rather, half subdued—and partially Christian-

ized by the strong-arm method of collecting them together by the tribe, sprinkling the chiefs with water, and telling them that they and their people are now Christians.

Having withstood Galla paganism, the church was called upon to face another attack; this time from a rival Christian faith. The Portuguese were now at the zenith of their exploration and conquest; and their Catholic missionaries made a long and determined bid to wean the monophysite heretics from the error of their ways.

Almost a century of argument—assisted by the sword and torture-chamber—resulted in the Portuguese Bishop Oviedo of Goa excommunicating the entire obstinate Abyssinian race, to which the then king, Claudius, retaliated by declaring the pope to be a heretic and formally calling his people to settle back under the true guidance of the patriarch of Alexandria.

Later again came the Jesuits with their vast organization and persuasive skill. Only to find the rock of Abyssinian faith as impregnable as ever. The last of them was expelled in the seventeenth century, and Abyssinia retired once more to pursue her own beliefs in an isolation more complete than old Japan's, which lasted until quite recent times.

A proud history is that of the Abyssinian church; and the Abyssinian people have remained almost fanatically proud of their faith. But a strong church, that has held its own by force of arms, unfortunately for itself as well as for its people, must needs have developed a strong temporal power.

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The ancient kingdom of Ethiopia groans to-day under the hard hand of a firmly intrenched church which, alas! has in many respects deteriorated into a priest-ridden institution of enormous wealth. As churches with too much temporal power have done before in the world's history.

Quite one third of the land belongs to the church; and of its ten million inhabitants one million are said to be priests. Too large a percentage of burden for any people. For of course neither church lands nor priests pay any taxes.

In corresponding ratio the pomp and ceremony of the age-old rituals are particularly, almost Orientaly, gorgeous; and by their splendor as much as by superstition the church holds to heel a fiery people who might otherwise with Oriental abandon overstep all bounds of human law and order.

So how may it be judged what is best for the people?

Yet to a close observer the great mass of the people are illiterate and ignorant. More so even than the Mexican peon. Their ignorance and superstition hold them in leash. But the enlightened Abyssinians, though they still doff their hats to priests, or even dismount when riding past a church visible on a distant hill; and though they bow the knee to hard established convention and implacable power, will restively agree that a church should restrict itself to matters spiritual, and that 10 per cent. of priesthood is too large a non-productive population.

It is the beginning of a slow and long-drawn-out revolt.

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An Abyssinian church shows the ancient Jewish influence upon the early Christian ritual to a marked and most interesting degree. The building plan has varied little from the outer wall and the inner wall and the various courts of the temple. Even the simplest wattle and daub structures of isolated country places retain the prescribed form of an outer fense which encircles the sacred inclosure, in the center of which stands a roughly circular edifice.

There is never a steeple, which is regarded—as by many people outside of Abyssinia—as a heathen symbol of phallic worship. In its place, the building is surmounted by a cupola supporting a cross, or sometimes an eight-pointed star, decorated with ostrich eggs, the symbolism of which seems to have been lost in antiquity.

The church proper consists of an outer court in which the general public, deacons, and priests not engaged in the service, congregate. Four doors at the cardinal points of the compass lead to an inner court, the eastern side of which is reserved for nobles and their ladies, and in the western side of which is placed a chair, or rather a throne, for the chief priest or bishop—and in the capital, one for the ruler of the country. These are the only seats admitted; for the congregation, as in the temple of Jerusalem, must worship standing.

From the inner court four doors again lead to the square holy of holies, shrouded with curtains—the veil of the temple—beyond which only the chief priests may pass. In the center of the holy place, upon an altar,

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rests the "tabot," a gilded, sometimes a golden, casket symbolic of the ark of the covenant.

The ritual clings to the most ancient form in that the people take no part other than to be present. The service is conducted entirely by the priests in the sacred Geez language, which is known only to themselves and is quite as unintelligible to the common people as is a Latin mass. It consists, of course, of prayers, readings from the Scriptures, and long intoned chants.

Music is provided by soft-droning drums, lutes, and rhythmic clicking sistra. In all probability the very same instruments played by the priests of Isis five thousand years ago.

The Abyssinian priests, more outspoken than many of our own and not so materialistically far removed from the ancient mysteries of the human soul—or perhaps more scornful of the intellectual timbre of their flock—are frank to admit that the throbbing rhythm of the music and the drowsy scent of incense, coupled with the gorgeous vestments of the priests, in the dim, stained-glass courts, are but properties shrewdly calculated to lull the people into a condition of mental quiescence fit to receive the comfort of the Spirit which is present where two or three are gathered together in its Holy Name.

With equal sturdiness they defend the many forms of their ritual which so closely resemble the ancient Hebrew on the very reasonable ground that Christ himself was content to worship in the very same manner in a very similar temple.

As is to be expected of a priest-ridden land, feasts,

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fasts, and observances are plentiful and of great importance. And as with a superstitious people, the forms and ceremonies are more rigidly observed than the spirit.

The first, most indispensable article of every Abyssinian's apparel is a silken cord of bright colors known as a *mahteb*. From this cord may hang a cross or a tiny silver casket—in the case of poor people, a leather one—containing passages of the Scriptures written upon parchment and blessed by the *abuna*. The function is much the same as that of a scapular. Or, with more superstitious individuals, it serves undoubtedly as an amulet, just like the amulets worn by Christians of mediæval times or like that worn by Mohammedans to-day containing passages from the Koran.

Few Abyssinians will pass a church without making an obeisance. An armed warrior with murder in his heart, on his way to settle a blood feud, will stop and devoutly kiss the wall of a church. A priest, upon being greeted, must be kissed on the shoulder. A vessel used for drawing water from a well on church property must not be diverted to any profane spring.

Graven images are forbidden as literally as under the old Mosaic law, though mural paintings of saints and religious subjects are part of the decoration of every church. Some of the latter, with gruesome mediæval realism, depict the frightful punishments in after-life which an orthodox church promises to the wicked. Being torn asunder with red-hot pincers by black devils and being slowly roasted over sulphur fumes seem to be the favorite horrors.

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Saints, of course, are legion, each with his feast or fast. Some of them are those familiar to us; others are indigenous to the country; and the wonders which befell them are quite as marvelous as the miracles recounted in the "Lives of the Saints." About a hundred and fifty days in the year of the religious calendar are written off to feasts and fasts.

The latter are observed with extraordinary rigidity, Wednesday, rather than Friday, being the universal fast day. But it is the Lenten abstinence that tests the fortitude of the people; and it is amazing to note the meticulousness with which men of the worst possible character will withstand temptation.

Under my own close observation came the example of my cutthroat mule packers, whom I had hired with their beasts for a long and arduous trek into the interior: men who lied and cheated and stole upon every possible opportunity, who treated their animals with inhuman cruelty. Yet for forty full days of hard and sometimes dangerous travel before Easter they subsisted upon unleavened bread and water, though deer meat was plentiful, and many a day's march left them exhausted.

It is pleasing to turn from the grosser aspects of a quite mediæval religious state of mind to some of the really impressive ceremonies of this ancient church.

The principal feasts are New Year (which, according to the Abyssinian calendar, falls on the eleventh of September), the Feast of the Cross (end of September), Epiphany, or the blessing of the waters, and Easter (a week later than our own).

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It would require a volume to go into the symbolism of the various ceremonies, and another one to scratch the surface of their historical significance; for many of them date back at least three thousand years. Let it suffice to describe perhaps the most interesting one of them.

In the book of Samuel we read that the priests danced before David and the ark of the Lord. So do they also to-day before the descendant of the house of David and before the tabot, which is the golden symbol of the ark.

Such a ceremony impels one to forgive this ancient church many of its modern failings. Upon each of the great feast days a vast marquee tent is set in some open place where the multitude can gather. The tent is lined throughout with heavy silk brocade and its floor is carpeted with priceless old Oriental rugs. In its center stands an ivory and gold throne, the seat of the Lion of Judah; and beside it, seats for the *abuna* and the chief priest.

The mighty men of the land arrive mounted upon mules decked out with silver trappings and take their seats behind a screen of fine white linen held aloft by an army of white-clad attendants, so that the undignified motions of getting seated and arranging draperies for most artistic effect may be hidden from the vulgar public view.

Not until all are posed is the screen swiftly rolled up like the raising of a curtain before a theatrical spectacle, revealing the royal group in motionless expectancy. In the distance the throb of drums is heard, presently

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blended with, and at intervals overlaid by, the drone of human voices in a rising and falling chant.

A procession approaches. A breath-taking serpentine of sunlight glinting upon a blaze of Oriental colors and gold and jewels. The tabots of the surrounding churches borne aloft by priests in garments of green and orange and crimson, stiff with precious embroidery. Thrice they encircle the royal tent and finally disappear into the semi-gloom of its interior.

Another procession comes. Priests clothed in rain-bows with golden crowns upon their heads. Twelve of them, symbolical of the twelve apostles, some of them bearing great golden crosses, others, disks engraved with mystic characters, others, horn-shaped symbols that remind one instantly of the crown of Osiris. Attended by acolytes who hold gorgeous gold-fringed umbrellas over their heads and followed by drummers and players upon the psaltery and the harp and the cymbals.

A chief priest solemnly reads in the sacred Geez tongue a passage out of an enormous Bible bound in stamped leather with huge gold clasps. A group of lesser priests with measured steps carries the Bible up to the royal tent; and the descendant of David murmurs through a ritual with them and concludes by reverently kissing the book.

Then the drums begin to throb once more and the sistra to tinkle, and the priests commence to dance before the king. A slow dance of formal steps and floating robes. The deacons and acolytes intone a chant so Orientally old that it takes in quarter tones in addi-

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tion to the half tones of the oldest written European music. The tempo of the drums rises and falls and the dance with it.

The swaying figures, weighted with their golden garments, tire. Others take their places. The drums boom on. The chant drones ceaselessly. The cymbals and the sistra clink their rhythm of accompaniment.

Till one feels one's whole being transplanted, carried back three thousand years to the pomp and the color and the pageantry of King David's court, when the Lord was a very imminent Presence who rebuked his kings and spoke to his people daily through the mouths of his prophets.

Surely so did his priests dance in solemn measure before the ark of the covenant.

The drums die down. The splendid processions wind away. One wakes out of one's dream of a gorgeous past and finds it within one's self to grieve that the mighty hand of modernism has begun to trace upon the wall the characters which mean that the church that perpetuates these ancient things has been weighed in the balance and has been found wanting.

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ASSUMING for rough calculation that men and women are about evenly divided in the world, it might as well be admitted that at least half of the more volatile men are interested in women. So that makes 75 per cent. of the world's population interested in marriage.

Marriage in Abyssinia should, therefore, be a book-worthy subject. If it may be accepted as an axiom that the ideal career for a woman is marriage and a home of her own, then the lot of women in Abyssinia is surely Utopian in its fulfilment of both desiderata.

In other lands and in all times—except those of the fabled Amazons—the laws, the traditions, the most primitive customs of marriage have been man-made, for the convenience or the vanity or the possessive instinct of the dominant male. The farther one travels back in time or toward the Orient, the more tyrannical are the conventions seen to be. It is only in Abyssinia, that least known land of Africa, that until quite recently maintained an isolation more aloof than did ever old Japan, that we find an anomaly as startling in this respect as in a host of others.

In this ancient kingdom of Ethiopia it is the women

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who have framed the conventions of marital conduct and have stoutly defended them in the face of a powerful mediæval Christian church. It was very early established in Abyssinia that women were people.

Long before that, even, the Queen of Sheba, the Ethiopian Makeda, showed her independence in her visit to Solomon; and feminine freedom of thought has persisted right up to to-day, when the present empress, Zauditu (which is the Abyssinian way of saying Judith), shows a good example by having taken unto herself four successive husbands. The royal individuality is further expressed by the fact that the fourth—and presumably the most satisfactory, for he is still her husband—is compelled to live on his own estates, a month's journey distant, and the empress conducts her household of several hundred dependents and slaves with bustling efficiency herself. Very much her own is this empress's home.

Following the royal example as well as long-established tradition, the women of Abyssinia maintain their complete independence in their own affairs and their own homes.

In the matter of choosing a career, a maid with the Abyssinian world before her feet may elect to become a thrifty woman of business; or commencing from the age of about thirteen, she may wed a butter and egg man of forty, divorce him and a few successors, and at forty, being—if she has been thrifty—rich herself, she may marry a handsome boy of thirteen. All in the best of taste and without criticism.

The reason for the persistence of so much freedom

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—and in Africa, at that—is difficult to guess. Perhaps it may be accounted for by the early Christian influence with its doctrine of equality upon a primitive land in which conditions necessitated that the women should bear a considerable share of the productive labor in the fields and cattle pastures.

It would seem reasonable that women, weighing the tangible produce of their own hands, would never submit to being the servants or playthings of lords and masters who contributed no more than themselves. Nor would they put up with being tied down for life to male partners who, perhaps, preferred to go hunting or fighting rather than furnish their legitimate share of sustenance.

The result has been the growth of an absorbingly interesting tradition—wrapped around with forms and ceremonies, of course—of easy marriage and easy divorce. A tradition which may, at first thought, startle the susceptibilities of fundamentalists who believe in the “holy bonds” of matrimony; but which is surely not without worth in that it eliminates entirely the so common “civilized” spectacle of long-dragged-out domestic infelicity. Abyssinian women refuse to believe in such ominous institutions as the “bonds” of matrimony or the marriage “tie.” They are quite modern in considering a husband as a partner in the business of life, to be separated from without fuss or overnecessary formality if the partnership should prove to be unsatisfactory.

Thus there exist in Christian Abyssinia four distinct forms of legal marriage, ranging from the indissoluble

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to the most easily soluble. The Fetha Negast, which is the ancient code that governs the life of every Abyssinian, lays down the laws. First, as in the prayer-book, whom one may not marry. Some of the prohibitions being wise, some quite quaint.

Lepers, elephantiasis cases, imbeciles, eunuchs, are justly excluded. But it seems hard to place a ban upon sprightly old ladies of over sixty and upon cousins to the seventh generation. And it is a distinct infringement upon personal liberty to insist that the parents as well as the godparents of a child must remain virtuous in all their dealings upon the day of its christening.

A divorcée may marry only after doing penance, and a widow after ten months' mourning. But a harlot may—and frequently does—wed without notice or absolution. A parent may compel a dissolute daughter to marry a strong-minded and respectable youth who will take care of her for the protection of the rest of the community morals. A minor, wedded by parental arrangement, may, upon coming of age, have the union dissolved upon the ground that she was not a party to the contract.

The most serious form of marriage, the so-called indissoluble, is not popular for the very reason that it is, in actual fact, very nearly as difficult to get a divorce out of it as out of our own hide-bound form. Nothing frivolous, ordains the Fetha Negast, can release one from this severe contract. Nothing less serious than a long term of imprisonment or epilepsy or unfaithfulness so unwise as to be a public scandal.

This form of marriage is shunned by the very great

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majority of women who wish to remain the arbiters of their own fate. Only those serious sisters submit to it who wish to marry into the priesthood and to devote themselves to good deeds.

It is the second form of marriage which is the popular one. This form approaches very closely to what is advocated by many leaders of thought among modern women. It is a legal civil contract of partnership blessed by a priest. And it has the enormous advantage over the American standard that divorce—if consent is mutual—is as easy as the marriage, and that mutual agreement of the—one can hardly say—opposing lawyers can arrange for an equal division of property without going to court.

The third form of marriage is decidedly advanced; one that is advocated only by the most extreme feminists. It is no less than trial marriage; solemnly ratified before witnesses, with or without the blessing of the church at the option of the contracting parties; but under no circumstances without legal mutual guarantees as to faithfulness, suitable maintenance, division of property, and so on. The period of trial is usually fixed at two years; after which, if the couple have not fought too fiercely, ratification into the second form takes place with due ceremony.

The fourth form is so redolent of our ultra-sophisticated metropolis that it is hardly respectable. It is, in fact, a temporary union for a predetermined period with option of renewal; during which the gentleman binds himself to provide a stipulated standard of living and dress and to pay a certain fixed salary to the lady.

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This agreement is saved from the stain of concubinage by the witnesses and legal contracts involved and by the blessing of a priest. Its most saving clause, however, consists in the fact that the man usually owes so much back pay to the woman that he is glad to effect a transfer to the popular second form, which provides for an equal division of property; so that the woman may owe him back a portion of the money that he owes to her.

There is not much variation in the actual ceremonies of all these forms of marriage, the difference lying really in the terms of the contract. Tedium may therefore be avoided by considering only the most usual, or the second, form, known as *bircha*.

Among the more rigidly particular of our own communities a girl does not consider herself to be honest to goodness engaged until she has received a ring with a large instalment diamond in it. In Abyssinia an engagement is no such paltry affair as that; nothing that can be wriggled out of by the mere forgetting of a summer vacation promise and the cessation of any further instalments.

Many generations of women have established the rule that when a suitor is accepted by the adored one's father he must produce a guarantor, a man of financial position in the community, who will stand surety that the engagement promises will be fulfilled and that the fervor of adoration will not cool off with the waning season. Such a guarantor constitutes one of the most important safeguards of the woman-made marriage tradition; for he must assume the serious responsibility

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of standing good for all the husband's future marital conduct. This is not such an outlandish innovation as it might seem to us; for it is no more than an Orientally strict interpretation of the office of best man.

Nor do engagement promises content themselves with the simple announcement of:

"Say, Pop, me an' Mame kinder think we'll get married some time."

Witnesses must be present and a priest to bless the fateful announcement, which must be reserved for a propitious day. The ardent lover must recite aloud a list of all the things he is going to give to the blushing bride—wise procedure; for the glare of publicity persuades many a youth to swell the list to fatter proportions than he might ever have promised in private. Then, since a bird in the hand is as comforting in Abyssinia as anywhere else, the young man must turn over a certain proportion of his settlement then and there; and the guarantor must make oath by the head of Menelek that he will accept the responsibility, not only for the rest of the goods, but for the rest of the youth's conduct during married life.

But there is justice in the procedure. Pa-in-law must in turn take the stand and enumerate with meticulous detail, down to the last sheet and cooking pot, the amount of the bride-to-be's dot.

Arrangements being satisfactorily settled, the priest pronounces his blessing upon the pact; and then witnesses and guests settle themselves in a row on the floor to a banquet. Here, too, a most practical common-sense justice prevails. If the father-in-law should hap-

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pen to be poor, or temporarily financially embarrassed, he can levy upon the groom for the wherewithal in cash or in supplies; which amount may be subtracted from the young man's promises when the wedding takes place.

The banquet concluded, the priest pronounces a final benediction. And after that the young people are only *engaged*.

The marriage itself is really a ratification of the engagement promises. The bridegroom and the father-in-law produce their goods, and some responsible person makes a list of them as well as of all wedding gifts brought by guests. This latter is most important; for guests may later, upon the occasion of their own or their children's marriages, claim gifts of equal value in return. A procedure surely to be commended in America as a mitigation of the wedding present nuisance.

Haggling, however, may follow a young couple throughout their lives. For it is inevitable that Aunt Zarah, who has given, perhaps, a bolt of sheeting, should feel convinced that the sheeting that is later on given to her own daughter is not so good as that which she got in the good old days. And how may a thrifty trader be convinced that a cow returned to him is as good as the cow that he gave four years ago; or that a hen will lay as many eggs as his prize pet used to do?

Guests having assembled and gifts been turned in, the responsible person enumerates all in a loud voice and demands whether both parties concerned officially accept and acknowledge them. If the bridegroom has skimped on any of his promises, the bride's father can

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make immediate claim upon the guarantor to make good. If pa-in-law has fallen short, it is the bridegroom's last chance to retain his freedom. He can back out on the very threshold of the fateful step on the ground of breach of contract. Or he can—if the engagement has been a short one and he is still as much in love as he thought at first—demand that the defaulting parent produce a guarantor for the balance of the dot.

If, however, no such hitch occurs and if all parties express their satisfaction before witnesses, then youth and maid proclaim aloud that they take each other to man and wife, to live together in "harmony and co-operation and mutual faith." Which, coming out of Africa, is a surprising improvement upon "love, honor, and obey."

The priest then pronounces his blessing upon the union and the deed is done. The guests express their congratulations, not by throwing rice—which is valuable food—but by shouting aloud and firing off guns. Which last is not an improvement upon our own madness of throwing shoes. For an exuberant father-in-law has been known to shoot an unwieldy guest; and spent bullets used to be the cause of so many catastrophies in the neighborhood that the ruler of the country issued an edict enjoining a less lethal manner of expressing joy.

The feminine hand in the building of tradition is seen in the custom that a month after the wedding the husband must take the wife to make a formal visit upon her parents and assembled marriage witnesses in order

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to prove that he is treating her according to promise. If she should, upon the occasion, show causes for complaint, pa-in-law may immediately descend upon the guarantor to pay a proper compensation.

Should the husband find that married life is a graver trial than his nerves can bear and therefore become ill-tempered and beat his wife, once again the guarantor of good conduct must pay damages based upon the station in life of the individuals and the severity of the beating.

It is the unavoidable injustice of the world that a rich man must pay more for his marital fancies than a poor one. Or, conversely, that a poor wife must suffer for less money than a rich one. A matter, of course, of that so perplexing thing, relativity. But it is also the immutable law of compensation that an irascible husband may continue to lose his temper and grow poor and a patient wife continue to suffer and grow rich—relatively.

It would seem that guarantors of husbands would be hard to find and would thus automatically act as a restriction against marriage. But the system is really an excellent one. It means only that parents and guardians levy upon a third party who has assumed responsibility under oath, and that direct friction between husband and in-laws is thus avoided. It is, of course, up to the guarantor to collect from his friend for whom he has stood best man.

All in all, the theory of marriage as it is conceived in Abyssinia has more than just a few points worthy of consideration. In practice, of course, many crudities

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and evasions are found—as also in the excellent theory of Buddhism or of democratic government. But the pure conception offers room for study to many of us self-satisfied Occidentals who vaunt ourselves on our civilization.

Divorce—or let us say, rather, dissolution—of this partnership has the admirable advantage that it is easier, almost, than the joining together, in that it does not entail the expense of a banquet. That is to say, not necessarily. Though there is no law to prevent a right proper celebration of regained freedom.

The reasons, as before said, may be very simple. If both contracting parties desire to separate, their desire is sufficient cause in itself. But justice is upheld and willingness assured by the formality of witnesses and responsible arbiters—not necessarily legal—who decide upon a fair division of property. The law, as laid down in the Fetha Negast, is based on the ancient Mosaic code. The arbiters take their duties seriously, and are sometimes so literally meticulous about an exact division that they will render a Solomon's judgment of cutting a garment in two or of apportioning a cow to one side and the calf yet to be born to the other—and of crowning that wisdom by demanding of the cow-holder a guarantor to make sure that he will properly nourish the calf till it shall be of weanable age. But in matrimony, alas! it is seldom that two people agree upon such perfect terms. One side or the other nearly always feels that a grievance exists which ought to be legitimately compensated. If it is the man who wants to make the move, he simply takes his wife back

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to her family and makes formal demand that they come together with him for the appointment of arbiters.

If it is the woman, she simply goes home, and it is up to her family to give formal notice to the husband to meet for the appointment of arbiters within a certain date. If within that date he does not toe the mark, cast-iron custom renders the luckless guarantor of the husband liable to pay the awful sum of a dollar and a half for each day's delay thereafter.

And all this without wasting one's substance upon lawyers. The Fetha Negast is the law and the prophets, simple code of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, or of cash compensation in their stead. There is little room for those diverse interpretations and technicalities and formalities of the law upon which lawyers fatten.

In the golden age—which in Abyssinia means twenty years ago in the days of Menelek—the stern code was sufficient to all things. There were no lawyers and no prisons. Only judges who knew the code. But with the later influx of European civilization and foreign trade, things became more complicated and both evils now exist. Though only for arguments between native and foreigner.

The Abyssinian still prefers to submit his case to the instant justice of the wise man who sits at any street corner, before whom he pleads his own case. Think of a land that is free from all the vast fuss and delay and the enormous expense of court calendars.

A dispute arises over anything from a debt of one pesa, which is one and a half cents, to personal assault.

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The aggrieved party raises a long-drawn wail of *hoo-hoo* and immediately a policeman comes running and grasps each party "by the hem of his garment." Both are at once in the hands of the law and follow meekly with a host of attendant witnesses to the nearest corner where a judge sits.

Accuser shouts his case. Defendant tries to outyell him. Witnesses act out their personal view with Orientally histrionic gesture. Onlookers applaud or jeer, and everybody enjoys himself hugely. Everything is settled on the spot and the judge's decision is final.

Alas! that Abyssinia is becoming quite modern in that it has been known that a friend may sometimes slip around and "see" the judge.

Marital cases, owing to absence of hurry, are more decorous. They are conducted usually not in public but in the home of one of the parties concerned. The arbiters, usually three, may or may not be judges appointed by the ruler of the land. But, once agreed upon, their decision is final. Lawyers may creep into the argument in that one of the parties may hire a glib-tongued orator to plead his case.

The basis of dissolution of the marital partnership is that all property is mutual, from which compensation is deducted from the one side and paid to the other side which can establish a grievance.

Sound common sense is the rule; though the ancient law introduces some quaint curiosities.

A mother, even if erring, has a strong claim upon her children, with, of course, a proportionate compensation for their maintenance. A faithless husband may

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have to pay for each one of his established indiscretions. Should particular cause for jealousy exist, either party may forbid the future marriage of the other with one particular person who must be named before the arbiters.

A woman may seek divorce on the ground that her husband does not supply her with hair-dressing money. Which needs a little explanation.

Perhaps the Abyssinian woman's only vanity is her coiffure. Her dress is standard; a long loose nightie sort of thing concealing tight ankle-length pants, and over it all a shawl draped in prescribed folds. All white, with the palest possible border. All that wealth can attain is finer texture and a little embroidery. Colors are a sign of mourning.

Jewelry is almost non-existent. Lavish display of rings, brooches, hair and ear ornaments, is not the best of form. A cross of silver or gold may be worn with good taste, suspended from a string round the neck; and threaded on a cord at the waist one may see an amazing jumble of more crosses, beads, great lumps of amber, or pierced coins. That is the limit of the gauds and gewgaws that an Abyssinian woman may hang about herself for personal adornment.

But her hair is in all truth her crowning glory. It is by nature curly almost to the point of crispness. But the abhorred woolliness must at all costs be avoided. Therefore the hair must be combed into innumerable fine strands and plaited tight in even rows, either round and round or front to back, or a combination of both. So tight that the stretched skin shows white

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between the furrows, and the well hair-dressed woman cannot bear to lie on a pillow, but must sleep with a wooden neck rest even more uncomfortable than the Japanese neck block.

That is, let us say, two thirds of the price of vanity. The other third consists in the fee which must be paid to the artist who inflicts the beauty treatment. From half a dollar to a dollar and a half, depending upon the pain and the texture of the plaits involved, just as in any other fine weave.

It is a woman's inalienable right that her husband supply her either with the cash for her coiffure or with some piece of real property, the income on which will pay the hair-dresser's bill. If he refuses to pander to mere feminine vanity she may divorce him.

On the other hand, a woman—shudder, sisters—may be divorced for persistent bad cooking. But the crying injustice of the land upon the suffering male is that a woman's sworn word against a man is accepted without supporting evidence—almost even as in America.

Perhaps America could learn something, too, from the divorce code of Abyssinia. Divorce out of an unpleasant union being so easy and so free from unpleasant notoriety, it is inevitable that a lonesome widow, with hope growing eternal in her feminine breast, should come to believe that possibly there does exist somewhere in the world a man who is not altogether a brute, and should try the experiment once more of building a home which will be at least half her very own.

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More than complete equality is woman's right in Abyssinia. *But*, it is the curse of Eve that mortal woman must pay in one way or another for everything that she gets. Enjoying freedom equal to man's, and protection considerably more so, the woman must bear an equal share, literally, of the burdens of life.

Unless, of course, one happens to be rich; in which case, with a few intellectual exceptions, Abyssinian women go to the Oriental extreme of doing nothing at all, literally. Servants cost three or four dollars a month, and a host of them wait in every anteroom and hall to tender to their lady's slightest wish. With the result that the lady usually grows more than merely plump. Which, since the boyshform has not yet obsessed Abyssinia, what matter?

It is, as always, upon the women of the middle and the poorer classes that the burden of work falls. The luckier ones may go into business or open stalls in the market; but the less fortunate, along with the men, must win their independence by the sweat of their brows. Yet who would not willingly work—and like a slave—for complete freedom?

It is not only in America that women will toil to maintain the liberty that they have won.

CHAPTER XXIII

HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

THE most careless of travelers—even a calloused would-be explorer who would rather go gallivanting about the country-side with a mule caravan, making casual observations of the high-lights for the sheer fun of go-look-see, than devoting his time to a ponderous study of people and things—must sometimes observe conditions of greater import than just passing interest. Of such are the problems that menace the last free corner of Africa.

The highest of high-lights in any land is, of course, the ruler thereof. In Abyssinia the luminary is—

His Imperial Highness Algaurash Tafari Makonnen.

The first outstanding observation that I can record about this prince is that I have the warmest admiration of him as a shrewd and far-sighted ruler who is carefully conducting his country through a maze of difficult problems; and the highest esteem of him as a man of infinite courtesy and kindness.

The next most immediate observation is, as the frontispiece photograph bears out, that his Highness's

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features are the strongest proof of that direct descent from King Solomon the Wise that the royal house claims.

Yet a third observation—in view of his handling of the problems that encompass his country—is that quite a considerable portion of the wisdom of Solomon has come down to his descendant.

His Highness is a young man, still in his thirties, yet he has steered his country through rocky channels that might well have sunk a much more stable ship of state.

Abyssinia is still free Abyssinia. She is slowly emerging from a condition of lethargy engendered by long years of isolation. The indications, and the hopes of her friends, are that under the same skilful guidance she will continue to remain free.

The next high-light of the land, after his Highness, is his Excellency Blatin Getha Herui, the minister of foreign affairs.

The minister, as his important position implies, is the gentleman with whom the foreigners in the land have most of their dealings. The immediate observation of all foreigners about his Excellency is the unfailing courtesy with which he receives them and attends to their multitudinous wants and complaints. It is his arduous and exacting task to assist his Highness in steering the ship of state through the intricate channels of international diplomacy.

I find it to be my own arduous and exacting task to try to explain some of the intricate problems of free Abyssinia which ought to be of interest to free Amer-

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ica, whence sprang the doctrine of self-determination of the smaller nations.

Arduous and exacting, because I know nothing about them. Who, without access to carefully guarded documents and to the private confidences of high officials, can *know* the diplomatic problems of any country?

I can discuss only surface indications. I can cite only what people say. But indications, if plentiful enough; and talk, if insistent enough, do most indubitably show what people, whether rightly or wrongly, think.

On this basis I venture the unequivocal statement that the problem foremost in the minds of people in Abyssinia to-day, both native and foreign, is, Will Abyssinia contrive to remain the last free country of Africa?

There are some foreign residents who hope, frankly and actively, that she will not. They look eagerly for the day when she will be taken over by one of the big European powers; preferably by their own; but by any one, rather than see continued independence.

There are other foreign residents who believe that the theory of self-determination, if at all tenable as a principle of international justice, cannot be arrogated to themselves only by the smaller nations of Europe, but is equally applicable to the smaller nations of the rest of the world. They feel that Abyssinia, with her unique record of freedom since before history began, should be given not only a chance but a helping hand to climb into an assured position of independent progress, regardless of the imperialistic ambitions of certain

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European nations. With this group are my own convictions, and, I am sure, the convictions of all Americans.

There are yet other foreign residents—those clever gentlemen who speak so intimately of European diplomacies—who jeer as at a foregone conclusion and regard the future with skepticism. These so plausible people point to the pages of recent history and at the map. Their argument devolves round the three pungent questions:

“Who wants colonies? Who has got the surrounding colonies? Who has *got to have* more colonies?”

Since the history of the past must have a bearing on the future, it is not amiss to turn a few of the more recent pages and to consider them with a map at one's elbow. First, perhaps, the map.

Abyssinia is astonishingly rich in natural resources. Speaking broadly, it may be said that the western half is mineraliferous and the eastern half is agricultural country. Abyssinia is surrounded on all sides by Italy, France, and England. Abyssinia is, owing to the arms embargo placed upon her by the high-handed agreement of the Big Three, defenseless.

What small country, even in Europe, so placed would not consider her position precarious and view the moves of her neighbors with suspicion?

As to history. Italy was the first of the three surrounding nations to attempt to control this rich terrain by juggling the wording of an agreement with the old Emperor Menelek. She claimed that that agreement conferred upon her rights to commercial conces-

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sions amounting to a virtual protectorate: and upon that excuse engaged in an invasion which culminated in her crushing defeat by Menelek in 1896 at Adowa and her payment of a war indemnity.

France, having obtained from the inexperienced Menelek a railway concession to connect French Somaliland with Abyssinia—under which concession, incidentally, she claims monopoly right to railroad construction in Abyssinia—indulged in a dream of colonial empire right through from west to east, to include, of course, Abyssinia as the choice morsel. The visible manifestation of her ambitious dream was the despatching of Major Marchand's flying column to Fashoda in 1898; which expedition was forced to withdraw by the loud growling of the British Lion, who had his own ideas about that part of Africa.

England, busy with her splendid plans for a map colored pink all the way from the Cape to Cairo, made no acquisitive move toward Abyssinia. She considered her interests in that country sufficiently protected by obtaining the all-important agreement of 1902 giving her certain rights for the construction of a dam across the Blue Nile at Lake Tsana in the heart of Abyssinia.

Now a map added to thirty-year ancient history is no proof that Abyssinia's big neighbors wish to gobble her up. Neither am I trying to produce such proof. I am trying to expose conditions which explain what people think. Particularly, in view of recent moves, what the people of Abyssinia think.

Representatives of the big neighbors maintain with

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stout insistence that nothing is farther from their desires than aggression upon Abyssinia. And they add the reservation: "Unless we are forced to by overt acts."

Overt acts, that ancient excuse of imperialism, mean, in plain English, just two things: the abrogation of treaties, and the damage, financial or personal, to foreign subjects. So that it can cover almost anything; and Abyssinia's problems, therefore, come down to the all-embracing two.

One is that she became entangled, during the days of the unsuspecting Menelek, in treaties the wordings of which allowed considerable latitude in their interpretation—as, for instance, the treaty under the excuse of which the Italians invaded the country.

The other recurring problem is the damage to foreign subjects—as, for instance, a fight between an Abyssinian border raider and a naked savage of the British protectorate of Uganda.

That these problems are not mere chimeras of alarmist minds is cynically pointed out by the scornful gentlemen who deride European diplomacies.

"Why is it," they ask, "that when a savage of French Equatorial Africa kills a savage of the British Uganda protectorate, nobody reads a lot of fuss about it in the newspapers? And why is it—if indeed those three big surrounding nations have no designs upon Abyssinia—that they flout all international law and combine to refuse the passage of arms and ammunition to this free country?"

No proof of anything at all in any of it. But, at least, pertinent questions.



The comely lass whose lover won her by killing a man with a lip-stick.



The coiffure of a lady of fashion. This type of face shows the Egyptian descent of these people.



THE HAIR-DRESSING SALON

That mop of wool must be reduced to plaited orderliness.



HANDPRINT BUTTER IS GOOD BUTTER—A NICKEL A LUMP



THE CORN GRINDING MACHINE

It is not so fast as an electric mill; but it requires no engineer.

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To continue these questions into very recent history:

Some of us may remember a couple of years ago a cursory notice in the papers that Abyssinia, having been admitted to the League of Nations, immediately appealed to that body for protection against British and Italian "aggression." The publicity that this step brought about revealed the indubitable fact that the two countries had quietly, without notifying Abyssinia or—*perfidie Albion*—consulting France, agreed to assist each other in their concessional aspirations.

The indignation in the Quai d'Orsay—that had been left out of the deal—can well be imagined. Expressions such as "secret pact," "expansionist agreement," "colonial aggression" fulminated from the virtuous French press. The Palazzo Chigi blustered and denied, while Il Duce frowned terribly. Downing Street boggled, hesitated, and then made a clean breast of it with a dignified explanation that the diplomatic notes which had been exchanged were merely preliminaries to a square and aboveboard agreement to define certain "spheres of economic influence," and to assist each other in securing them.

This so-called "secret agreement" was to the effect that if Italy would help England to obtain a concession to build a great dam across the Blue Nile at its outlet from Lake Tsana in the mineraliferous west of Abyssinia, England would help Italy to get a concession to build a railroad to connect her Eritrea in the north with her Somaliland in the south, virtually cutting off the whole agricultural east of Abyssinia.

Now whether these two nations had a right, accord-

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ing to the laws of international ethics, to make secret agreements about the only portion of free Africa that is left is not to the point. Whole acres have been printed in the European press defending as well as attacking what was, at the very least, a diplomatic *faux pas*. But a discussion of the pros and cons is not within the scope of this book. It is in the effect of it all upon the Abyssinian mind that we are interested.

Now the Abyssinians are perfectly well aware that Italy has made no secret, ever since the treaty of Ucciali in 1889, under which she claimed her "protectorate" rights over all of Ethiopia, to acquire—let us say, at least, a foothold in Abyssinia. They do not need the prompting of the clever linguistic gentlemen of the cafés to answer the question as to who has *got to have* colonies, and particularly agricultural colonies for an overgrowing population.

They see in Italy, under the thumb of her frowning megalomaniac, the most aggressively militaristic people in the world to-day. They know by heart all the Mussolinic utterances about "the Italian right to a colonial empire" and "the time to take up the heritage of the Cæsars." The clever gentlemen who know so much about diplomatics whisper abroad that a leader, however great, cannot be infallible; and that one who has fed his people with war talk must, as soon as he suffers the first political reverse, give his people a popular war in the hope of riding back to power on the crest of a victorious wave. And what war could be more popular than one which would wipe out the stain of the crushing defeat at Adowa when the Abys-

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sinians captured the entire Italian army, horse, foot, and guns?

No sly whispers are necessary to direct notice to certain indiscreet yelps in the Italian press—as, for instance, in the “Nuova Antologia,” describing Abyssinia as “the sick man of eastern Africa whose disappearance as a state would be an advantage for civilization and for peace.”

No grimy finger is needed to point out on the map the barren desert of Eritrea in the north, and the almost barren Italian Somaliland in the south; nor is any hint required to raise the question: Why should Italy want to connect these two deserts with an expensive railroad which proposes to cut Abyssinia in half right through its richest agricultural portion?

An illuminating answer appears in certain sections of the British press itself. Commander Kenworthy, an able English member of Parliament, puts it piquantly:

“Ethiopia, being a Christian country, the protection of missionaries, the one-time favorite excuse for intervention, is not available. But railway construction is another favorite weapon of imperialism. For railways *need guards*.”

To give teeth to this witticism, he points to the spectacle of the Russian railroad through the heart of Manchuria with its line of armed guards to “protect its property.”

As to the other half of the “secret agreement.”

The British desire to control the outflow of Lake Tsana through the Blue Nile is more creditable. To

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put it briefly, all the world knows that the fertility of Egypt depends upon the yearly flooding of the Nile proper, and that the yearly flood depends upon the water from the tributaries, of which the most important is the Blue Nile.

The British have spent enormous sums of money in the building of dams in British territory to control this flood as much as possible; and British engineers have claimed for many years past that by the construction of a dam at the Tsana outlet in Ethiopia the flood could be controlled to so much greater advantage that vast additional tracts of land could be brought under cultivation in the Sudan.

Abyssinia has for the same number of years past hesitated to give into British control a concession in the heart of her mineraliferous region for so enormous an undertaking that would similarly *need guards* for the protection of its property.

It has been discussed at considerable length in British newspapers and magazines whether England has not an actual right to demand from Ethiopia, a member of the League of Nations, a concession to construct a dam for the altruistic purpose of providing food for some millions of people in the Sudan, and whether Ethiopia has any right to withhold such a concession.

Now all these arguments are quite probably all fair and above board. But there do not lack anti-British interests—quite aside from the suave skeptics of the cafés—who denounce the theory of altruism as a camouflage to conceal the sordid commercial—if not aggressively imperial—purpose of the proposed dam.

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These people wallow in the most ramified and futuristic politics.

Cotton, they say, is at the bottom of all this advertised altruism. America, they point out, controls cotton, which she sells to the British spinning mills. Such control, naturally, is irksome; just as American manufacturers find the British control of rubber to be irksome. Egypt, too, grows a great deal of cotton which goes—at present—to England under a favorable tariff. Cotton is, in fact, Egypt's most profitable export. But Egypt has been breaking away from England these last few years. Therefore, the British have been planting huge areas in the Sudan under cotton. With the control of the Blue Nile irrigation—so say the clever gentlemen—the British can grow heaven knows how many more million acres of cotton in the Sudan and can thereby always hold the economic sword of prices at unruly Egypt's throat, as well as break American control of the product.

The Machiavellian gentlemen go farther. They claim that expert engineers have produced proof to the Abyssinian Government that the crafty British plan is to obtain by the construction of this dam a source of electric power greater than all Niagara; and that this power will electrify military railways in the Sudan right up to the Ethiopian border. That it will even be brought the comparatively short distance to Addis Abeba, and will there in some mysterious way menace the supremacy of the French railway at the capital.

Far-fetched, doubtless, and fantastic. But plausible. So damnably plausible that nobody can be blamed if,

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while by no means believing all of it, the uneasy question remains whether there is not possibly some truth in some of it.

As for the French corner of the triangle: they have contrived to keep wisely aloof from this most recent argument—except in the enjoyable rôle of critics. But, as the enlightened and the thinking Abyssinians—and even the foreign business men of Addis Abeba—express themselves:

“France doesn’t need to exert herself. She has her hand at the throat of Ethiopia with her existing railway, which is in the strategic position of being able to control our entire commerce by charging an arbitrary sliding scale of tariff which enables her to control every single item of import and export.”

Furthermore, it is upon France that the odium of Cerberus falls. France is the guardian at the gate. Djibouti, in French Somaliland, being the only port, it is pompous French officialdom that watches the imports and exports and controls the iniquitously imposed contrabands.

It is a startling fact that an order was placed with an American firm for six of the so-called sub-machine guns—not by any irresponsible person, but by the duly accredited representative of the free Ethiopian Government. And that the American firm, upon making proper application, was refused permission to ship the guns to Djibouti in transit for Abyssinia.

It is personal experience that I, a free American citizen, wished to buy in Djibouti a French-made shot-

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gun to bring into free Abyssinia, and that I was informed by polite letter from the French legation, which I have in my possession, that I might, if I wished, apply to the governor of Djibouti for permission to import the gun, but that it was very unlikely that such permission would be granted to me.

In order to overcome just such high-handed interference, there exists in Europe a "Polish corridor" to the free port of Danzig. To obviate just such strong-arm injustice, there exists in America a growing movement for the cession to Bolivia of the strip of Tacna-Arica territory, so that this similarly shut-in free country should have her road to the sea and control her own trade with the rest of the world.

Why should there not be an Abyssinian corridor to the open sea?

Instances to illustrate the problems which surround Abyssinia may be cited *ad infinitum*. But in the foregoing résumé of recent history I have cited enough. Some of the facts, let me admit, may be inaccurate; all of the interpretations may be utterly false. *But*, these are the things that the people of Abyssinia say and they explain what the people think.

Who can say that Abyssinia, wrapped around as she is by intrigue, is not justified in being suspicious of the motives of the powerful neighbors who surround her?

It is the result of these conditions and of the feelings engendered thereby that ought to be of tremendous interest to Americans. It is owing to these justifiable suspicions of Europe that free Abyssinia to-day

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reaches out her hands to free America, asking for friendship, offering opportunity.

Abyssinia is enormously rich in potentialities, needing only development. She offers the opportunity to American business to help that development.

It has been my good fortune to explain something of recent American history to his Highness Algaurash Tafari Makonnen and to some of his ministers: to show that America, in spite of blundering or ill-advised policies now and then, has at least three enormous outstanding assets.

America does not need colonies; does not want colonies; does not have to have colonies.

Whatever friction might arise, whatever "overt acts," Abyssinia need never under any circumstances fear acquisitive aggression from America.

Therefore Abyssinia welcomes American enterprise.

To this end his Highness despatched his most able confidential adviser, Dr. Wargneh C. Martin, on a mission to America to carry his message of good-will to President Coolidge and to open negotiations with American business. At this writing the indications are that some of these negotiations will develop into business of great mutual benefit to both countries and will be the beginning of profitable opportunity for further American enterprise.

I make a plea for Abyssinia.

Let America, vaunted land of freedom, accept the friendship that Abyssinia, unique land of freedom, offers. Let America grasp the reaching hand of opportunity and help this land to grow, as she has

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grasped other opportunities and helped other lands to grow.

And I make a prophecy for Abyssinia.

Three things.

Some day the existing problems of Abyssinia will withdraw themselves. Some day the iniquitous arms embargo will be broken. Some day Abyssinia will have her own road to the sea.

The next five years will show at least the beginnings of fulfilment.